[*Gender Reveal* theme music plays]

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

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey, everyone. Hope you’re all hanging in there. This week on the show, I am so excited to share part one of our first ever *Gender Reveal* live show, featuring the incredible activist and organizer Alyssa Pariah. Alyssa and I talk about how we can be better allies/accomplices to sex workers, what trans healthcare would look like under Medicare For All, and how the movement for Black Lives supports trans liberation more than most LGBTQ-focused organizations do.

**Alyssa:** Anybody who calls the cops is not on my side. Anybody who supports the U.S. military is not on my side, that supports prisons and police and occupation; you’re not on my side, so I want to be able to be honest about that.

**Tuck:** But first, thank you so much to everyone who has joined us on Patreon in the last few days, including but not limited to: Matt, Claire, Jessica, Jenny, Robert, Shakura, and Will. As you heard last week, I quit my gosh darn day job to focus on this podcast and other trans equity work with [Sylveon Consulting](https://www.sylveonconsulting.com/), which means that patreon.com/gender is my primary source of income. So y’all are literally making my life possible and I appreciate you more and more every single day. And of course, the Patreon doesn’t just buy me lunch; it also pays all the expenses for the show, and it funds our grant program. You will be meeting several of last fall’s grant winners later on this season. In the meantime, if you would like to help support the show, support trans media, you can do so at [patreon.com/gender](http://patreon.com/gender). When you sign up at just $1, you will have access to our weekly newsletter. If you donate a bit more, you’ll get stickers, pins, other fun goodies. Or you can just make a one-time donation at <paypal.me/mollywoodstock>.

In merch news, we have a new design by a talented artist named Eli. The design says, “Nature is queer and I am nature.” It is based off real-life queer or trans or intersex cardinals. I don’t really know how cardinals define their gender, but it is beautiful; I’m so excited about it. It is available at <bit.ly/gendermerch>, along with the rest of our stuff. It’s available as a sticker, a mug, and our first-ever children’s T-shirt, if you wanna buy a shirt for a kid that says, “Nature is queer and I am nature.” All proceeds are split between Eli and two of Eli’s penpals who are incarcerated trans women who Eli met through Black & Pink, so I’m really excited about that. Again, that’s at <bit.ly/gendermerch>. And with that, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[trumpeting news music]

[“The Back Lot” by Blue Dot Sessions begins; a bluesy, transient track]

**Tuck:** So, This Week in Gender we are going to talk about something really heavy for a minute, and then we’re going to talk about emojis. If you are a trans person who does not have the energy to grapple with the heavy part right now, that’s totally fine, check the show notes and I will tell you where to fast forward to. Okay, so, you may have heard that there are many state legislatures who are trying to more or less kill trans kids right now. Per reporting from our friend, Katelyn Burns, eight state legislatures, including Missouri, Florida, Illinois, Oklahoma, Colorado, South Carolina, Kentucky, and South Dakota, have already introduced bills this year – this year, 2020 – that would criminally punish doctors who follow best practices for treating adolescents with gender dysphoria. In South Dakota, for example, doctors who prescribe puberty blockers or HRT could face a $2,000 fine and a year in prison under the proposed law.

So as reporter Laura Thompson wrote for *Mother Jones*, quote, “After hours of heated and often comically inaccurate debate, South Dakota’s House of Representatives on Wednesday became the first in the country to green light a bill that prohibits gender-affirming medical care for transgender kids. The bill would make it a Class 1 misdemeanour for doctors to provide minors under the age of 16 with hormone treatment or gender confirmation surgery. Proponents of the bill say it protects children from, quote. ‘medical experimentation.’” The bill, by the way, is called the Vulnerable Child Protection Act, go fuck yourself, that’s an aside from me, Molly Woodstock; that’s not in the article. What *is* in the article is that the bill’s author has compared doctors who provide gender-affirming care to literal Nazis. During Wednesday’s floor debate, one Republican representative said such procedures would some day be considered as dangerous and pseudoscientific as lobotomies, and said, quote, “We’re talking about cutting off little girls’ breasts.” “It should go without saying,” says Laura, “that little girls don’t have breasts.” End quote.

On Wednesday, the bill passed the House with a majority vote. It now goes to the Senate to be discussed in February, which is now, I guess. There’s also *another* bill in South Dakota right now that would make all school psychologists, counsellors, and social workers into mandatory reporters for gender dysphoria. So if you are in a counselling session and you are a closeted trans youth, that counsellor is legally required to tell your parents you’re trans, which of course can lead to homelessness and all sorts of other catastrophic results for this poor child who’s just trying to live. Anyway, I don’t have a lot of commentary for this one. Obviously we hate this; it endangers the lives and well-being of trans kids and gender non-conforming kids. So if you live in a state where these kind of evil shenanigans are taking place, please call your legislatures, talk to them, protest, petition. If you are a trans youth or an accomplice in those areas, reach out to us, let us know how we can help you. I would love to do anything I can.

[background music cross-fades to “Sylvestor” by Blue Dot Sessions]

**Tuck:** But I don’t want to leave it here because it is not fun to dwell on this when you live in hell, so let’s talk about the new emojis coming in 2020. You may have heard that the emoji update will include the transgender symbol, and then the motherfucking trans flag! So we have… the trans flag. That is not all. That is not even close to all, because there is also: a person with a mustache wearing a wedding veil; a lesbian with a mullet in a tuxedo; a Christmas-themed emoji called, “Mx. Claus”; a magic wand – but not the kind you’re thinking of; and a gravestone, because R.I.P. all of us. Don’t forget, our crowning glory: a *fisting* emoji. Technically, it is called “the pinched fingers emoji.” Many folks are calling it, “Italian hand gesture.” But we all know what the chef’s kiss looks like, and it is a fisting emoji.

[background music continues]

**Tuck:** I cannot emphasize this enough: what a time to be gay and alive.

[background music fades out]

This has been… This Week in Gender.

[trumpeting news music]

[upbeat electro-pop background music begins]

**Tuck:** This interview with Alyssa Pariah took place at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon on November 23, as part of the 2019 Trans Action and Care Conference. I wanted to give you some of the feel of the event, so before the interview starts, you’ll hear conference organizer Eli Hess introduce me. Fun fact: Eli was originally going to be the first-ever *Gender Reveal* guest, but I absolutely had no idea what I was doing, so the interview wasn’t good. And so it got scraped, not because of Eli, purely because of me, but now they’re making it onto the podcast anyway. Important to note that this interview includes frequent discussion of murder, police brutality, and death, as well as brief explicit descriptions of sex. Please take care of yourselves.

[background music fades out]

**Eli:** Hey! This is gonna be a podcast that is live.

[crowd cheers]

**Eli:** [laughs] And it’s the first time that *Gender Reveal* has ever done a live podcast, and that’s really exciting. And Molly Woodstock is my friend, and that’s exciting. And Alyssa Pariah is here *again*, and that’s even—like, that’s just, all of it’s really exciting. So, please enjoy, and I’m going to let Molly introduce themselves.

**Molly:** Yeah. Sounds good. Hey, Z, you’re recording this podcast?

**Z, in background:** Yes!

**Tuck:** Cool. Um, okay, so, my name is Molly Woodstock, and if you haven’t heard *Gender Reveal* before, well, I guess I start it every time by saying welcome to *Gender Reveal*, a podcast where we hopefully get a little bit closer to understanding what the hell gender is. Uh, my guest today is Alyssa Pariah, who I’m so excited to talk to, and if you could introduce yourself, that would be awesome.

**Alyssa:** Hi everyone, my name is Alyssa Pariah, my pronouns are she/her/hers. I’m the co-chair of Portland Jobs with Justice, and I’m a longtime activist here in Portland. Uh, I’m usually screaming at protests.

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

**Alyssa:** I’m a trans woman.

**Tuck:** Great. I would love to hear first, just, like, I know you’re really busy today. So where are you coming from and where are you going today?

**Alyssa:** I just walked down here from a protest in Pioneer Square in Portland, Oregon, which was calling attention to yet again, uh, Israeli’s siege on Gaza, and their continued illegal occupation and expanding settlements and devastation to Palestinians. And I’m going to a fundraiser where I will be MCing for Critical Resistance, an organization that was founded in part by iconic Angela Davis. That’s an organization that’s dedicated to ending the prison industrial complex, abolishing prisons and police.

**Tuck:** Yes. I don’t know if you’ve seen on Twitter and Instagram, people are doing a lot of, like, 2009 to 2019 comparisons, and in 2009, uh, you were working with the Audre Lorde Project, and I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about that organization and how it impacted your life.

**Alyssa:** Yes. The Audre Lorde Project is a collective of queer and trans people of color that are dedicated to continuing, uh, the feminist, socialist, scholar, thinker, activist Audre Lorde, uh, and her work and her vision for beloved community. And they see themselves as being a, uh, sort of radical edge of what’s acceptable as a 501(c)(3). So, 10 years ago, at 85 Oxford Street in Brooklyn, New York, I was tapped to be part of the Audre Lorde Project’s first-ever TransJustice Community School that was led and taught by Maya Vasquez, who is a, uh, Afro-Puerto Rican trans woman, as I am, who is doing important work to get us – Black and brown trans women, sex workers, who are not yet invested in political change – to learn about our potential power as change agents.

Especially in showing up for one another when we get, uh, busted by the police for prostitution and have no way of knowing how to defend ourselves, we learn about how to show up and do jail support for one-another, because it’s very difficult to find that otherwise. So the TransJustice Community School taught us how to do that and so much more, especially teaching us how to, uh, show up for people who are not like us but need bodies and other people who are activists and advocates to show up for them, so we learned about how to start a campaign, how to, uh, lobby, how to, uh, do a protest from start to finish, how to collect people and ask them to be sustainers and members of, uh, enduring organizations. And I’m very grateful, uh, and I’m very proud to say that I was the valedictorian of that class, so… Eat it, bitches.

[Tuck and crowd laugh]

**Alyssa:** Yeah. So, it worked!

**Tuck:** Yeah!

**Alyssa:** I’m still here, ten years later!

**Tuck:** Yeah, you are!

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Yeah, so you’ve done a bunch of organizing since then, and I know that you do work with the DSA a lot, the Democratic Socialists of America, and one of the things that DSA is talking about a lot is Medicare For All, and I was curious how you think trans justice would look under a Medicare For All system and how we can move towards that.

**Alyssa:** Number one, there has to be a promise by the coalition, uh, local and national, to not allow for any carve outs for trans care, because it is a boogeyman that the right uses all the time to try to convince confused cis people that if they vote for universal healthcare, then there will be all of these surreptitious trans people that are getting all of this superfluous medical attention and draining their pockets at the end of the day. And this is something that has to be fought against right now by people who are advocating for Medicare For All. So that, ideally, there are trans people who will be willing to dedicate their time and their talent to building this movement now, so that when Medicare For All wins, it will be because of a strong contingent of trans people who fought for it. So I want people to be doing that work now, so that when we win, and we will win, uh, the United States of America *will* have universal healthcare, and it will be explicitly in favor of trans people accessing the care that they need.

**Tuck:** I’m so excited.

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Great. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** I’ll see you at the doctor’s office.

**Tuck:** Perfect. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Wouldn’t that be fun, if trans people could just go to the doctor and, like, have a good time? [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Oh, yeah. Without a horrible trauma-inducing anxiety attack? I’d love that. Oy.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah, exactly. Seems cool.

**Alyssa:** Alright.

**Tuck:** This is a cool utopian future. So, I was watching a YouTube video from 2016 where you were talking about Black Lives Matter and how you felt like the movement for Black Lives were showing up for trans people and trans liberation in a way that other, just, LGBTQ-focused orgs were not showing up, and I would love to hear more about that.

**Alyssa:** The—so that was at a Trans Day of Remembrance, and they asked me to speak, and I didn’t want to read the names. That—it’s excruciating. So, no. I spoke as a member of Don’t Shoot Portland, which, uh, is the organization that brought the Black Lives Matter movement to Portland, and is named after, sadly, the last words of Michael Brown, who was killed by officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, and his last words were, “My hands are up. Don’t shoot.” And he shot him in cold blood. And left his body on the street for four-and-a-half hours, making his mother watch in horror as his body was cooking on hot black pavement. So we had four-and-a-half minutes, moments of silence at all of our protests and, uh, continue to do work to try to bring community together to learn how to resist. So I was recruited to Don’t Shoot Portland by, uh, its leader Teressa Raiford, who is running for mayor of Portland, and will win, and will unseat our current mayor, who is… a nightmare. A nightmare.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Alyssa:** So I was asked to speak, uh, to talk about how the work of Don’t Shoot Portland intersects with trans justice, and I think that it does so in a way that I felt non-profit organizations and advocacy groups are really lacking, because the Black Lives Matter movement is explicitly in favor of people having their basic needs met. Without question, people’s human rights and dignity being respected, without question, especially in, uh, relationship to the State, proper, that, uh, we can say, “Fuck the police.” And that resonates with trans people who are enduring poverty who can’t enjoy any of the basic joys that most people in this country take for granted because we’re so targeted for state violence. So, to me, the open arms that the Black Lives Matter movement, locally with Don’t Shoot Portland, uh, where I was able to really feel my power and, and develop my voice and learn how to project it at protests… I scream with every ounce of my pain at every protest because that’s what I can do, and if I don’t have laryngitis at the end of a protest, I feel deep shame.

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** So, I talked about that in a personal way, but more broadly, in cities all across the country, because there are coalitions in almost every city in the country that did shutdowns and was calling people to, uh, protest against police violence and racism. Uh, they were explicitly in favor of having specifically Black trans women in the leadership and in the forefront of their movement, and I felt like that was very important, because the organizations that we are all meant to think are our saviors do a very poor job when the time comes to speak out against police violence against our trans siblings, that oftentimes they are in league with the police, and will, uh, advocate for *more* police presence and, and will insist that these police officers have received sensitivity train—oh my God!

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** I don’t—I, I can’t even stand that term! “Sensitivity training.” Oh, wow! Ugh.

**Tuck:** They’re sensitive now, it’s fine. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Insisting that, that—so, that, insisting that the police can ever be safe for us. And then when it comes to poverty alleviation, they are often also sitting on their hands because the people who run *those* organizations are very well-established, usually cis, White gays, who are from the middle-class and are enjoying a very lovely lifestyle. I mean, go to any of their parties, I mean, there are champagne wishes and caviar dreams everywhere you go. And you would think that we are living in two different realities, and we *are* living in different realities, so that when they, uh, have their parties and they, uh, do their mass meetings, you just look around and you’re like, “Where am I? Is this the Chamber of Commerce meeting? With a rainbow flag?” And you know what? Sometimes those meetings do, uh, match up, and they are gay and lesbian Chamber of Commerce meetings, and we’re all meant to believe these people are on our side; they are not on our side. The Black Lives Matter movement did a much better job at being inclusive for trans people than the, uh, LGBT organizations that we’re meant to believe are on our side.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. I also saw in a different video, you said that, like, identity doesn’t necessarily mean solidarity. Do you feel like you just answered that question, or do you want to talk more about what that means to you?

**Alyssa:** Oh, I can talk about that all day long!

**Tuck:** Please talk about it. I would love for you to do that.

**Alyssa:** No, I, uh, I, I that the, the class question in, in this case is really key. So, I am born and raised in poverty, still endure it, and the people close to me are suffering under it and are dying from it now, because now I’m 32 and my friends are dying all around me, and they *wouldn’t* be dead if we had socialism, and people didn’t have to worry about living under a roof, eating food, not freezing in the street. And, and having money be a barrier for them because they can’t afford the price of life. So I think that the—it’s really important to always bring that out, that, “Okay, I’m, I’m under the LGBT umbrella, uh, just like some millionaire business owner, you know, techie, who happens to be a guy who sucks cock.” And it’s like, “Okay, great, but, you know, uh, if, if I get a little too loud, you’re gonna call the cops on me tonight. You’re gonna go back to your million dollar condo, and you’re gonna continue living your life and you’re gonna feel good about the champagne and caviar fundraiser that I just saw you at, and you’re gonna insist that we’re all fighting for the same thing, but really, we’re not fighting for the same thing. Anybody who calls the cops is not on my side. Anybody who supports the U.S. military is not on my side, that supports prisons and police and occupation; you’re not on my side, so I just want to be able to be honest about that, so that they can’t even get a foothold. And, and insist that we’re on the same side, ‘cause I, I wear my politics on my sleeve, and I don’t ever have to engage with that. So, when they see me coming, usually they pipe down.

**Tuck:** [snickers] You mentioned that you’re 32, and like, 33 is a really significant number for...

**Alyssa:** That’s when, that’s when we die.

**Tuck:** Yeah, trans women of color specifically, and also, you’ve had a lot of friends pass away. How are you grappling with turning 33?

**Alyssa:** Not that well. So… Uh, one of my friends who died recently, and her name was in the news, and I don’t want people to forget, is Layleen Polanco Xtravaganza. And she died in custody. She was at Rikers. Rikers is the... infamous jail that warehouses people who are awaiting trial in New York City. And she could have gotten out, but she didn’t have $500. She’s a person who had to also be born and raised in poverty, and sell sex to eke out a living, and it’s really dangerous, and there are traps all along the way. She got caught up in one and the cops got her. And she had a seizure and died in protective custody, in solitary confinement. And I believe that if you die in solitary confinement, the jail killed you; you got one job, and that’s to keep someone alive who you have the nerve to keep in a cage.

And she had a seizure. And they found her body dead. And it opened up a lot for me, because it made me take stock of all of my other friends who have passed away in similar conditions. And it’s very sad and sobering, but I have to grapple with the reality that things are not getting better, there’s not improvement on this. When I think about me making it, I feel a strange mix of happiness and pride that I’ve been able to make it but also guilt, because those are people who are just like me; they’re not different. And they’re dead, and I’m alive. So I’m feeling guilt about even still making it.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Is there a way that you push through that guilt, or do you just…?

**Alyssa:** I… meditate in front of a mirror, in the dark, with a candle, and some water. And try to give myself an honest look and think about what’s coming through, what I’ve been through, and what I would like to do in the future. Forgiving myself for all of the bullshit that I’ve done, and promising that I am not going to give up, even when I feel like that’s the best option, because I’m a person that has some talent. I can hold a room.

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Uh, I can face down riot police and make people who thought that they couldn’t be change agents see that they are. And honestly, I, I want to see the other side of a revolution. I would really like to live, and be able to see that we live in a just world, and if that means that I have to endure a lot of pain, well then, I guess I’ll just be enduring a lot of pain, but I want to live.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I just want to say that if you are justly horrified, bail funds exist. Pay trans people’s bail. Like, it’s really not hard to just pay trans people’s bail, and then this won’t happen in the same way. So, you mentioned sex work, and I think that a lot of people that otherwise, like, consider themselves really progressive and they have really good politics, uh, they think, you know, they think so, uh, don’t know how to show up for sex workers in a way that is actually productive, don’t even know what their politics should be on sex work. So I’m wondering, as a sex worker, if you could talk about what you think we could be doing better to show up for sex workers.

**Alyssa:** In every city, there are coalitions of people who are working to decriminalize sex work, to, uh, keep the local police from even putting on stings in the first place. So if there’s no funding that’s coming from the city to local police departments to conduct stings, then there will be *no* arrests. So I know that, uh, a lot of us are split on whether we want decrim—or, decriminalization, or if we want legalization. Uh, that’s, I, I fall on the decrim side. I just think just keep the police out of our hair and we’ll figure out the rest. But in every city, if you type in, uh, “sex work decriminalization” and the name of your city, you’re likely to find a coalition of people who are ready to use your time and your talents.

And if you are someone that is disconnected from that organizing and you just want to do education, you can host an education, you can invite the people who you would otherwise just be going out for pizza with, or something, and just ask them to come and learn about sex work decriminalization. And I think that that could make an incredible difference, because the issue that a lot of us face now is just that we’re so other-ized and people tend to be, frankly, kind of disgusted with the idea of selling your body to somebody else who wants to have access to it. But, uh, that’s something that can be remedied through education, period, so…

**Tuck:** Excellent. So, Trans Day of Remembrance was really recently, and you mentioned – and I agree – that, like, just reading a list of names is not enough, and is really agonizing a lot of the time. Uh, what would you like to see on Trans Day of Remembrance?

**Alyssa:** Well, what they did at Portland State University was dope. They used the theme “trans joy,” where they wanted people to talk about what helps them to keep going, so that, uh, rather than just mourning the dead, and we must mourn the dead, uh, we can fight like hell for the living like Mother Jones said. And that includes allowing people to share their stories, and their hopes and their joys, so that other people can hear about it and maybe be inspired by it. So I was happy that they asked me to come and share my story, and I, I think that that’s dope and I want to see more people like me coming out and talking about what keeps them going so that we can be an army of trans bitches... [laughs]

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** … who are out here, that—fighting for one another, and in a much more real and tangible, material way.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. I did appreciate—’cause you were here speaking last night about trans joy. And you talked about joy, but you talked about taking joy from activism, and you took joy from, like, situations that could be seen as really dark, and you found a way to pull joy out of that, which I think is so real about being trans and there’s so many times when I’m talking to someone about what it’s like – a cis person cabout what it’s like to be trans, and something frustrating that’s happened, and I start laughing, and they’re like, “Why are you laughing?” And I’m like, “What else can I do? We live in hell!” Do you wanna talk a little bit about that?

**Alyssa:** Most of my jokes end up being about death. And if it’s on my mind, I’d rather not hide it, and if I can find people that are not mortified, then I’d like to keep them close. So I don’t want to feel like I have to edit myself around people. I think about getting killed by Nazis or the state *every day*. So I’d rather not conceal that, and I guess it is helpful to just crack jokes about it, so that I can just let that energy out while fighting against Nazis and the state, so, let’s go, bitches.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, so, last October, the Trump administration did one of its many, uh, shitty things, I don't even remember what it was – I think they tried to redefine gender as sex and then also got the definition of sex wrong, it was a nightmare. But you made a video about it, and, uh…

**Alyssa:** [laughs]

**Tuck:** … you said, “I hope we get a little bit more honest about what it’s going to take to end trans lib—oppression.” What’s it gonna take to end trans oppression?

**Alyssa:** What the—you did your research. This is very good.

**Tuck:** I do, yeah. Thank you! [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Okay, yeah. Uh, yeah, excellent.

**Tuck:** It’s a good podcast; it’s called *Gender Reveal*. Anyway, sorry. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Everyone should listen.

**Tuck:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** I am frustrated with the state-wide nonprofit that, that does a lot of this work. I’ve seen them in action, at the state capital, when they’re doing their lobbying. When I was doing lobbying for 15 Now, to raise the minimum wage, that’s when I saw a lot of the state-wide, uh, official LGBT™ representatives at, uh, the, the state-wide organization here, very chummy with representatives, who I know work very hard to criminalize people who are houseless, people who are seeking basic services, and making sure that they don’t get their needs met, and I think a lot about poverty and poverty alleviation; I think it’s at the centre of a lot of, uh, the, the problems that trans women like me face. And I know that there are lots of trans people who are not in poverty, who don’t experience racism, but that’s where my heart is at first; I need to be able to be honest about that.

So when I see people who are my own, in some sense, getting chummy with reactionaries that are in positions in the legislature, it really rubs me the wrong way, and especially when I read their annual budgets and their reports, and they have the nerve to congratulate themselves. And I’m like, “You know better than I do that trans women who are houseless are being beat up by the police! And are being thrown in jail! And you mean to tell me that your political priorities for the next year are for helping the LGBT Chamber of Commerce?” Yeah, I have an axe to grind against every Chamber of Commerce!

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** No, because the, the Chamber of Commerce, uh, all around the world, they, they are a lobby, uh, or essentially, a, a union of bosses! Of people who are owners, who work together to try to keep their taxes low, to try to increase policing, to maximize their profits, to, to squelch their workers. No! I, I’m a trans woman against Chamber of Commerce, even when they’re rainbow Chamber of Commerces. But those are the people that in every city and every country in the world get priority from the organizations that get funding from the state, that do lobbying. So what that ends up looking like is when someone is, uh, trying to fight for a minimum wage increase, and I see you in the hallway, and you’re on the executive board of the state-wide LGBT organization, and you glare at me, I’m gonna remember that for the rest of my life!

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** So I’m not cool with it, and that’s what that video was about, because I was so enraged. The idea that all of these organizations begin to clamor, to posture and show how outraged they are by Trump – I’m sorry, but Trump is the logical conclusion of any rainbow capitalist.

[audience snaps]

Like, that is where your line of thinking goes to if you believe that we can get equality by people being allowed entrance into a, a corporate-dominated system. That’s not the way, because I already see that the little bit of a foothold that some of these people get into this system, what they do immediately is get chummy with the people who would probably like to see them *dead*. But they get chummy with them and turn their backs on me because I’m on the street saying, “Stop killing homeless people.” And looking at me like, “Oh, you’re s—you’re, you’re such a disrupter.” Yeah, I’m a fucking disrupter, and you’re complicit! So who’s worse? You, bitch, not me!

[audience snaps]

**Tuck:** I love Sagittarius season. Anyway, um...

[audience laughs]

**Tuck:** Yeah, this is the part of the show where I just ask if there’s anything else that we haven’t talked about yet that you wanna make sure we talk about it, that you say.

**Alyssa:** So, I’m the co-chair of the Portland chapter of Jobs with Justice, and, uh, without just promoting, uh, our organization, uh, I want people to think about what our mission is, and it’s very basic. When I meet people out at protests, and I bring uh, our contact cards, they’re pledges. And the pledge is really simple, and it’s just, you agree to show up at least five times a year for somebody else’s struggle, or for an organization that is in a different part of the struggle, because it really has to be treated like one. So, uh, usually it’s, uh, about labor disputes, so it’s putting onto picket lines. Never cross a picket line! How ‘bout that for, like, uh, a message?

If there are, are workers or community members who, uh, have the nerve to organize themselves and say, “Do not patronize this place, do not support this place,” and they form a picket line: Do. Not. Cross it. Those people are fighting for everyone; they’re not just fighting for themselves, their, their wages, their benefit packages, or what have you. They’re fighting for everybody. Even if they don’t know it themselves and there are some people who are deeply transphobic who are members of labor unions, and it’s my work to engage with that. Uh, but I think that when people get it in their minds that while, for example, where I came from today—I’m not a Palestinian; I’m Puerto Rican. But I show up to *every* protest against the Is—*illegal* Israeli occupation of Palestine. I’m not a prisoner, I have—I’ve never been one, hopefully I’ll never be one. Oh, God!

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** My FBI agent is licking his chops. “I can’t *wait* to put you in prison!” But I show up to everything that Critical Resistance does. And I hope that if my work does anything, it’s to help people turn on a light in their heads and say, “Okay, this thing doesn’t affect me directly, but these people are fighting for justice for all. And that’s what I wanna be a part of.” And that’s where an organization like Jobs with Justice comes in. And we’ll send you notifications whenever something that we endorse, uh, is coming up, and if you can fit it in your schedule, you come out, you put your body in the place, you get counted, uh, you yell and holler, you leaflet, you hold a sign.

And when they write the history of how people won dignity across the world, and they *will* write that history, they’re gonna see your lovely faces. They’re gonna see that you were one of the people that helped make it happen. And even if you can’t get out there, you call any of the organizations that are doing this work and you tell them about your special talents, and if they’re any good at organizing, they’ll figure out how to plug you in. And suddenly, you’re being an active member of a community of people globally who are fighting for social justice. Let’s go!

**Tuck:** So good. Do you feel like you just drop the mic every single time you say anything, it’s so powerful, and just like, uh, another amazing thing!

**Alyssa:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Tuck:** Do you—? Yeah, good. Good! That’s the answer! So I just have a follow-up question about that, which maybe you just covered it, but like you said, like, there are transphobic people in unions.

**Alyssa:** Yes.

**Tuck:** Like, a lot of unions are, like, mostly, like, shitty straight cis White men. And I love unions, but I don’t want them to be the only people that have access to unions, and, uh, it can be frustrating, I think – maybe this is, like, really selfish – but like, it can be frustrating when you’re already organizing for all these people who, like, don’t give a shit about you.

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Uh, do you feel like there’s a way to use the power of union organizing to mobilize for things like trans rights?

**Alyssa:** Yeah. The AFL–CIO, the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which is a, uh, overarching, uh, umbrella of organization that most unions affiliate to in the United States. They have a program called Pride At Work that is better in some places than others, but foundationally, it’s about getting union members to connect with one another, and to try to pull the rest of the AFL–CIO to understand that the working-class is multi-gendered and multi-sexual, and that people who are represented have to understand that when you’re a member of a union, that means that there are people who you’re going to be interfacing with who are not like you, and you would do very well to use that opportunity to learn about how to be a decent human being.

And when you do that, you strengthen the working-class, because it is going to be a battle – a real battle, a class war; they didn’t call it that for nothing. It will be one, and you’re going to need queer and trans people who have, uh, a different kind of creativity – not to establish a hierarchy here, but I’d say more creativity – to help you win your strikes, and your campaigns against bosses, and it’s incumbent on people who have the gift of gab, if somebody listening now, uh, is somebody who can hold a crowd and who can make people listen to them.

If that’s you, then think of it as your burden to help educate people about us, so that people who cannot do that, who are just too hurt by transphobia and homophobia to do that, well then, yeah, it is your duty. It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love and protect one another. We have nothing to lose but our chains. Assata Shakur. Busted out of prison, lives in Cuba, they can’t catch her.

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Chris Christie, the governor of New Jersey – I’m from New Jersey. Chris Christie, the governor of New Jersey lobbied Trump to try to get Assata to get extradited from Cuba as a part of, uh, him getting the presidency. It didn’t work. Assata’s still living and thriving in Cuba. You can’t catch her, period. So, yeah, it is our duty to fight for our freedom, it is our duty to win. So if you have skills, I think that it is your burden to use them to contribute to, uh, a larger global movement for social justice.

**Tuck:** Absolutely.

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** I just want to thank you so much for being here, for speaking with us. We are going to ask this last question, and then we are going to take a short break to applaud for you for a long time, and then we are going to shift gear a little bit, but while we’re doing that, people can send you money. What’s your Venmo?

**Alyssa:** [laughs] Uh, alyssapariah, A-L-Y-S-S-A-P-A-R-I-A-H, thank you in advance. I’ll send you back a lovely love note.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah, so if you feel like you learned some—obviously learned something, I’m not even gonna say that. You learned something from Alyssa. You can compensate her for that. So, the last question, the way we always end this part of the show is, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Alyssa:** Total abolishment. When the doctor slaps your baby’s ass...

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** … to make them breathe…

**Tuck:** Yes.

**Alyssa:** … them looking at the genitals is not going to mean one thing or another. There are not going to be disgusting gender reveal parties anymore. People are going to understand that, uh, when your baby learns language, they will *tell you* what their gender is, and you’ll accept it, and there won’t be so much trauma and pain that you end up carrying for the rest of your life. You’re not gonna be looking over your shoulder when you’re walking down the street, you’re not gonna be afraid to get on the bus, you’re not gonna be afraid that somebody who you date might murder you once they fall in love or something like that. Protect yourselves! Trans women, please be careful when you deal with these cis men. Because even though you might feel real calm, real pussy, just like, “Ooh, he likes me so much because I look like every cis woman he’s ever been—” Maybe you do. But you know what? The world doesn’t love you like they love those cis women, and that’s going to end up really getting to his heart, and you gotta be real careful about how he’s gonna act to you once that starts to weigh on him.

Most of the trans women who I know who’ve been murdered by men are murdered by men who they were dating who knew that they were trans. There was no trans panic, they didn’t see her cock and suddenly think, “Oh my God, what am I doing?” No, no, no. You sucked it, you rubbed it, you loved it. And now, you’re dealing with secondhand transphobia, because maybe someone in your life found out that the woman that you’re seeing and loving is trans, and it makes you nervous. And they’re killing my friends, your friends, *our* friends, our friends and family. That’s what’s really happening. So, just watch it. These cis men are the most dangerous people to ever live, so, be careful.

**Tuck:** Alright, Alyssa Pariah everyone.

**Alyssa:** Hot take.

**Tuck:** [laughs]

[crowd applauds]

[*Gender Reveal* theme music begins]

**Tuck:** I love that’s where we left it.

[applause fades out]

**Tuck:** That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. Tell your friends what you learned from Alyssa, tell them to tune in, maybe send them a link to the episode. Even if they don’t know what a podcast is, we’re on Spotify, and, like, everyone has Spotify, right? So, this is really the only way we get the word out about the show, so I really, really appreciate you helping us spread the word. You can find Alyssa on Twitter and Instagram and Venmo @alyssapariah. I asked Alyssa if she had any projects she wanted me to plug on this episode and she said, quote, “Go to every union picket and protest against the cops.” We have no choice but to stan.

You can find us at gendereveal on social media, and also at genderpodcast.com where you can send us messages with your thoughts. If you would like to support the show and support trans media, you can do that at [patreon.com/gender](http://patreon.com/gender) and <paypal.me/mollywoodstock>. Our merch, including our new “Nature is queer and I am nature” design, is at <bit.ly/gendermerch>. If you would like to hang out with 600 or so other trans people and, I think, also some chill cises, uh, you can do that at <bit.ly/genderslack2>. That’s “genderslack” and the number 2. You can buy a theymail message to be read on the show in the form in the show notes. You can send us your questions about gender with the *other* form in the show notes. Wooh. Spiel’s getting long.

Today’s episode was produced by Z Griffler. It was edited by me, Molly Woodstock. Special thanks to Eli Hess, Grace Piper, Portland State University, and everyone else who helped put the show together. Thank you also to Jery and Emma for coming out of state, and taking photos, and bringing donuts, and providing emotional support. And to everyone who came out for the live show, each and every one of you made it so special and I so *deeply* appreciate you being there. Our logo is by the talented Ira M. Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions. We will be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Alyssa:** Yeah, I have an axe to grind against every Chamber of Commerce!

**Tuck:** [laughs]