[*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, Tuck Woodstock.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music fades out]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone. I hope you're still all hanging in there. This week on the show, we're returning to our regularly scheduled programming not because anything is back to normal, or because I think anything should go back to normal, but because I do think it's important to keep moving forward, and I'll never be able to do that if I keep stalling on releasing the last two episodes of the season.

So, this week on the show, we're airing our interview with Addison Rose Vincent. Addison is an incredible non-binary advocate and also, coincidentally, is someone that I went to college with. They were a couple years behind me, but after I left, I kept an eye on all of the incredible activism they were leading on campus, and I'm so excited that they've kept it up in the several years since they graduated. In our chat Addison tells me what it was like being the only transfeminine person on campus, about rushing for sororities as a trans person,

**Addison:** Seven of the eight sororities on campus at the time had written bylaws that stated that women needed to be "born women" in order to be allowed into the sororities.

**Tuck:** And they also talk about the double-edged sword of visibility, about being a transfeminine person with a beard, and about working at Disneyland.

**Addison:** What I did was, I pretty much was Mickey Mouse's bodyguard.

**Tuck:** But before we get to that, just a couple quick things. First of all, thank you so deeply for your support of the show in these strange and chaotic times. Thank you for listening, thank you for sharing episodes with your communities, and thank you so much to those of you who financially support the show at patreon.com/gender. Special thanks to everyone who has joined us in the past month, and of course if you're donating to the show, don't forget to also support Black trans folks and organizations as well.

And speaking of which, you only have a couple days left to snag our limited-edition Pride month merch, because Pride month is already almost over, which I refuse to believe or accept to be honest. But anyway, there's a load of great stuff in the shop, 100% of proceeds support trans artists and Black, trans, and sex-worker led organizations. That's all at bit.ly/gendermerch.

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

[*This Week in Gender* intro plays]

**Tuck:** This Week in Gender, I could definitely find more bad things to talk about, but what if we took a break and talked about good things, for a minute?

So, first of all I finally got to watch *Disclosure*, which is a new documentary on Netflix about trans representation in film and television. Laverne Cox is the executive producer, it's directed by Sam Feder who also directed the 2014 film *Kate Bornstein is a Queer and Pleasant Danger*, and all one zillion people interviewed in the film are trans including, gosh, Alexandra Billings, Chaz Bono, Candis Cayne, Tre'vell Anderson, Yance Ford, Tiq Milan, Jen Richards, Mj Rodriguez, Angelica Ross, Leo Sheng, Susan Stryker, Lilly Wachowski, just so many more. [pause] This film was a really intense watch for me because it was incredible to see so many successful and talented and smart and beautiful trans people on screen talking, and in that way, I was like wow, being trans is a gift and look at all these incredible, incredible, wonderful, trans people. And then also, all of these wonderful, successful, beautiful, trans people are talking about the way that trans people have been represented in film and television, and that's bad, it sucks. Turns out, shocking news for you, the way trans people have been depicted in film and television is bad and sucks. So it is a really emotionally intense film, but I loved it. I watched it with my roommate, they're recommending it to everyone they know, they've already watched it again, I'm recommending it to all of my consulting and workshop clients. So I hope you get to watch the film if you can stomach all of the clips that obviously do depict transphobia.

And speaking of trans representation, my friends Cass Adair and Arlie Adlington have been on a roll lately, so I just wanted to make sure to remind you about Cas's new trans activism podcast, it's called *Transcripts*, and it's made with The Tretter Transgender Oral History Project. The first episode is out now wherever you get your podcasts. Also, Cas and Arlie teamed up to make an audio story for Jacobin's podcast *The Dig*, it's in the episode *Antibodies* part one [note from Tuck: oops, it’s called *Antibody*, my bad], and what happened was Cas taught Arlie how to inject T over Skype, and I was also on that call just being half asleep and trying to be supportive. And so if you want to hear the sweet, sweet, good, good story, that's on Jacobin's podcast *The Dig*. And last but not least Arlie's story *The Toilets at Home are All Gender Neutral* is not new, but it was just aired on shortcuts again and it's a wonderful piece. So if you're looking for trans representation made by actual trans people, go check those stories out.

Finally, I just want to take a moment to celebrate that Graham Linehan is permanently banned from twitter.com. You may know Graham as the 52-year-old creator of the TV shows *Father Ted* and *The IT Crowd*, or you may know Graham as @glinner, the person on Twitter with a huge following who just fucking hates trans people for some reason. Graham has spent years saying some really vile stuff about trans people under the guise of “speaking up for women” and “women's rights,” including comparing trans-affirming medical care to Nazi doctors experimenting on children. When Grace Lavery, the partner of recent Gender Reveal guest Danny Lavery, tweeted about how it might be difficult for her to teach queer and trans studies courses in contexts where students' families could overhear them, due to remote learning, Graham accused her of "grooming," among other things, and sent his followers after her. So Grace led a big campaign to get his tweets reported and he got temporarily suspended, and then he came back and said some more transphobic stuff, and now, it was one strike too many and he is gone, off of Twitter forever. So, write in and let us know the next transphobe you'd like to see get kicked off of Twitter, and in the meantime, this has been This Week in Gender.

[*This Week in Gender* outro plays]

[Background music plays]

**Tuck:** Addison Rose Vincent is a 27-year-old queer transfeminine non-binary advocate from Los Angeles, California. Born in Canada and raised in Michigan, Addison moved to California at the age of 17 to pursue their dreams and to come out. Since graduating from Chapman University with a major in Peace Studies in 2015, they have worked for several Los Angeles non-profit organizations providing direct services to LGBTQ+ people facing sexual or domestic violence, housing insecurity, unemployment, addiction, and risk for HIV. Addison now serves as the executive director of the Nonbinary and Intersex Recognition Project, the founder and lead consultant of Break the Binary LLC, and the co-director of History Reimagined.

[Background music ends]

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

**Addison:** I identify as non-binary transfeminine and I use they/them pronouns.

**Tuck:** You and I went to college together, I graduated a couple years ahead of you, but my experience was that that college was a fairly conservative place. I only saw a couple out trans people on campus, none of them were students, we certainly weren't saying our pronouns in class from my experience. I'm curious what it was like to explore your gender in that environment.

**Addison:** Wow, well, you're opening up a whole can of worms! [Addison and Tuck laugh] College was definitely an interesting experience. I mean I was raised in Michigan, in Bloomfield Hills just outside of Detroit, and when I was in Michigan I just felt so scared to be out, and to be who I was at the time, and I looked to schools in California and New York, ended up choosing Chapman as we both did, and the first day of orientation at Chapman I actually came out as gay. I was so excited to be in a new environment. I felt that just getting away from Michigan and getting away from all these people who already knew me, and had expectations of me, just getting away from all of that and being in this more progressive space as I thought it would be. [both laugh] I was so excited to be out and proud, and so it's a bittersweet experience for me, looking back at my Chapman and college experience, because I was in a time when I was just so excited to be in a new place and start fresh, and at the same time face a lot of challenges and obstacles, and trying to be who I was, too. And as you remember too, I mean there are so many times where trans and non-binary students have been invalidated on campus, and like you said, pronouns or something that were even looked down upon in terms of being discussed within classroom settings. So it was definitely interesting [laughs].

**Tuck:** Yeah! This is a little bit different but I was in the film program, and there were so many films that we watched that were really overtly triggering, like they were really violent or they had rape scenes and there were never any content warnings, because content warnings didn't exist. And I think so often, how often I had to leave the room because I was feeling really, really not okay, and then I just think back and like, oh that's because there were no content warnings, so that was a triggering environment. It wasn't because I was uniquely broken, but that was kind of the atmosphere that I felt like I was in, that oh, there’s something wrong with me.

**Addison:** Absolutely. Well, I mean and it also completely reflects too the faculty, staff, administrators, that, you know, have been meeting at that time, and even still today I think that when we look at it it's a lot of white cisgender straight men, you know, that are especially in the film school in particular, as well as other schools on campus, and I think that, like you're saying, violence is so normalized on campus. I mean I even think back about my last year when I was really bringing attention to the busts on campus [Tuck:mhmm] Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Ayn Rand, all these really conservative, really right-wing figures, and people got really, really upset, and, you know, very very resistant to any idea of discussing the violence that those figures had created or caused. And, so violence is just so normalized on campus and in so many different settings. I apologize that you had those experiences too.

**Tuck:** Yeah, no I mean it was actually nothing compared to, I'm sure, what you went through. And speaking of that, I mean not only did you come out as queer and then as trans but I remembered suddenly as I was prepping for this interview, the concept of Delta Queen, [Addison laughs] which I hadn't thought about in, you know, however long since you ran for it, six years?

**Addison:** Yep!

**Tuck:** I think I was already gone by then. But Delta queen is this school-wide pageant [Addison: Mhmm] that had always been as far as I know for cis women and so I'm wondering, just that choice of being like, not only am I going to be out on campus but I'm going to be very, very out, and I'm going to be pushing the boundaries very publicly of what is acceptable in the space. Can you talk about just what gave you the impetus to take that much of a step?

**Addison:** Yeah for sure! I think, okay so at the time when I came out as gay, remember I'm 18, freshman, and thankfully there is a community on campus. I wasn't the only queer person on campus and at that time I knew of at least one trans person on campus, but she was a senior. And she graduated the next year, and I ended up at that time, as a sophomore and going into my junior year, realized that I was also trans and non-binary, but when I came out, I too, like that previous trans person on campus, her name was Sarah, I felt that I was actually the only person on campus who was openly trans, at least transfeminine, and that was really eye-opening for me. I realized that I didn't have community that I could connect with, people who had the same experiences, and I realized that I felt that I needed to create opportunities on campus for more trans people to be seen, to be represented, and hopefully as a way to bring more trans and non-binary people to campus, or allow people who are already on campus as students, faculty, staff to be more open and proud about who they were. Again, this is like, we're talking about a really conservative campus, so I understand how scary it was. So for me I think I just needed to push those boundaries and create that representation.

But delta queen wasn't actually where the story began, it actually started the semester before. I had actually rushed for sororities, and I went through the whole sorority recruitment process, and it was a three-day weekend, and I remember that week I signed up to go through sorority recruitment. I had heard that there were a couple sorority girls from Alpha Phi who had gone and complained to the Panhellenic Council representative about me rushing, and she was already someone that I had talked to and that supported me, and so she went ahead and allowed me to go through the recruitment process, and from what I knew I was the first openly trans person to go through this sorority recruitment process at Chapman. So I went through that and I learned in that process that actually, seven of the eight sororities on campus at the time had written bylaws that stated that women needed to be "born women" [Tuck gasps] in order to be allowed into the sororities, and there was only one sorority that actually explicitly stated that they were trans-inclusive, and that was Delta Gamma.

So [laughs] going through the sorority process was definitely very eye-opening and I learned so much about it and it was, I mean, a lot people were like, “oh my gosh, how awful is it to hear that so many sororities were not trans-inclusive,” but for me, the reality was that I talked to so many sorority sisters who felt completely opposite to what their councils and their bylaws were stating. And it was so amazing to hear about all the discussions and the advocacy, even though it may not necessarily have been successful for me, there was a lot of discussion that ended up leading, I think, to the stage of more the sororities now having trans-inclusive policies. And I actually just learned just last year that a trans woman on campus was actually able to get into Alpha Gamma Delta sorority after some of those changes. So to me, I'm glad that those discussions are finally being had, and I'm glad that I was able to push those boundaries at that time, unfortunately Delta Gamma didn't end up wanting me in their sorority, and I don't think that our values aligned at the at the end of the day, which was fine. I'm glad that I was judged not based on my gender but based on who I was as a person right? And I was a little bit upset that I couldn't get into a sorority and enjoy those experiences that so many of my friends who were sorority girls were having, but I realized that Delta Queen was coming up in the spring and I was joking with friends about how funny would be for me to actually compete, and then I thought, well why not? There is actually no rule that says that the contestants need to be sorority, you know, girls it just needs to be a representative from each of the sororities and fraternities. I reached out to the Adelphos and within 20 minutes they said we want you as our representative. And that's how it happened.

**Tuck:** God I love Adelphos [both laugh].

**Addison:** They were great, they were selling pickles on campus as a fundraiser for Delta Queen, it was so funny.

**Tuck:** Yeah, they were, so I think context for 99.9% of listeners who have not gone to Chapman University [Addison laughs] is that Chapman at least when we were there was close to 50% Greek life participation, so being systemically barred from Greek life was actually even more violent than it sounds, because it was the main system of building a community on the campus.

**Addison:** Yeah it was definitely a big part of social life on campus. Student life was, like you said, it was forty to fifty percent Greek. So, I mean so many people were involved in it, like I said I had so many friends who were associated with Greek life, you know as a non-binary transfeminine person I didn't really have a place to fit into that.

**Tuck:** Mhmm, yeah. Alright, well, I won’t make you talk about college the whole time but I do appreciate hearing that. [both laugh] So can you talk about your transition from college to what you do now, did you go straight into full-time queer and trans activism from college?

**Addison:** So after I graduated from Chapman in 2015, I actually ended up working at Disneyland for a full year. And I’m grateful for that experience, again, another bittersweet experience, and I think that to be able to say that I worked at Disneyland is just part of my Southern California experience [Tuck: Mhmm] at the end of the day. I worked there for a year in entertainment. What I did was, I pretty much was Mickey mouse's bodyguard so whenever Mickey, or the princesses, or any characters were coming out into the park to meet and greet with people that were coming in as guests, I would be the person with them making sure that they were safe, that if they needed to go for a break that I coordinated that, I came up with a storyline like Mickey mouse needs to go get some cheese he'll be back soon you know? [Tuck laughs] That was me, so I was doing that for a full year and then after that point I took a small break, went back to Michigan. My visa, I'm actually Canadian, my visa had actually expired at that time and so I went back to Michigan to be close to the border, to just reassess what I wanted to do next with my life. I ended up getting a job back in Los Angeles with an organization called Strength United which provides direct services and advocacy for survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and I actually came on board as a new type of lead advocate that would be building an LGBTQ program for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. And after that point, that was 2016, and I ended up getting more involved in other nonprofit organizations providing direct services to LGBTQIA+ people, and now I'm in this role as executive director of the Nonbinary and Intersex Recognition Project.

**Tuck:** Yes! And I want to talk about that in just a second, but I do have to ask what it was like to be a trans person working at Disney because they are also not known for being a cool liberal progressive organization.

**Addison:** [laughs] Well you know, first and foremost I would say that the pay rate was terrible and if is anyone that's listening that you know, works for Disneyland or any of the resorts or knows someone there, just know that like the pay rate is terrible and that folks that work there are doing so much, and putting out so much energy, and deserve to be paid accordingly. So that's just one thing. I think that the biggest thing that I noticed in terms of pay rate though too was that they try to get people to get excited about working there and stay there by offering them perks. So you get free admission to the park, and you get to get free tickets for 16 times during the year and then there's other little things, discounts in the store, but you end up spending all your money back into Disneyland that you just got back from working there, so that's a whole thing.

But as a trans person it was definitely interesting. I came on board and I was presenting still in a hyper-feminine way as I did throughout Chapman, no beard, long hair, makeup, was on hormones too. And when I came in, and I was actually recruited by Disneyland to work there, I let them know that I was actually transfeminine, that I used they/them pronouns, and they told me that I needed to actually choose between male and female in order to coordinate what type of costumes I would wear, the uniforms that I would wear, how my documentation would be listed as too. So it a was still really binary system, but thankfully at the time they allowed me to self-identify and choose between male and female, so at least that was there but there was no non-binary or genderless option.

**Tuck:** Mmm, mhmm [pause]I don’t want to assume anything about how you were being read at the time, but were there any sort of interesting, [laughs]

**Addison:** [laughs] Experiences?

**Tuck:** Interesting experiences with the families that were there?

**Addison:** Oh my goodness. Okay so I would be asked so many times by little kids “are you a boy or are you a girl?” and I would always come up with a new answer. [Tuck laughs] So sometimes I would tell them that I was something of course, other, and I was trying to explain non-binary, but then I realized that I’d have parents looking at me being like what are you doing, that's not part of your job, so it was a little frustrating. One time when a kid asked me, “are you a boy or a girl?” I asked the child, “what do you think?” and they started pointing different features and said “well, you have long hair like a girl, but your voice is like a boy, and you know, your face looks kind of like a girl,” and so I was like “interesting!” I was like, “well, you know, I'll let you figure that out!” [both laugh] I really don't know where to go from there because, I mean it takes so long to kind of explain gender, and unfortunately when you're even a little kid asking so many questions too, it does take time to unlearn already understandings of the binary in terms of gender. I think that people have this rigid idea of gender already built into us at the age of two or three, because of what we see and what we've been taught and what we even see in TV shows or the relationships around us, the people that are, you know, even raising us, so it's a long conversation. But I got lots of questions, and thankfully not too much harassment or yelling at, but mainly stares and sometimes questions from curious kids who rightfully have a, are curious you know?

**Tuck:** Yeah, of course, I mean speaking of trying to teach folks about gender, and how difficult that process can be, I know you are the founder and lead consultant of Break the Binary LLC, which is LGBTQ trainings and consulting. And as someone who also has a company that focuses on trans trainings and consulting, I'm curious as to what you have found to be surprising about doing that work.

**Addison:** What’s been so rewarding, I want to say, that every time that I do a training is that there's always one person that sticks around to the end and will come up to me afterwards and tell me that they realized through the training that they were actually non-binary or trans, where they now have the language to self-identify or maybe it's that they have a family member, a partner, a child, who is exploring their gender or has come out as trans or non-binary and now they can understand a little bit better. So I think that's what's so, not necessarily surprising, but rewarding for sure in the work that I do, is knowing that it's, it's really changing people's lives.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely! And so not to make you not just focus on all of the fun things but something that was really surprising for me when I started doing trainings is how confident, I'm in Portland, and how confident people would be about, “yes I know what trans means, yes I know what non-binary means, I definitely know how they/them pronouns work, I feel very confident about that,” but they had never heard the word cisgender, and that's the sort of interesting place that I feel like we are in as at least this little micro-community of people who are like “I know enough to understand that you're trans, but I don't know enough to know that I'm cis.”

**Addison:** Right.

**Tuck:** Or are they cis? Who knows. But to know that “I could be cis”, to have that language so I think, yeah I was just curious if there's anything that that you sort of have to focus on making sure that you hit hard with people.

**Addison:** Yeah no I think that that’s actually a really great point. When you're talking about cisgender I mean you’re talking about privilege. And so when we get into that people can get really sensitive and not realize how, when we’re talking about trans and non-binary experiences, how it does play into these greater systems and that cisgender people are part of that system as well, right? So I think that that's kind of sometimes unnerving for people to recognize even when we talk about other types of privilege, when it comes to race, or immigration status, or class, people are uncomfortable with that. So, it’s about working through it and helping people really start to think about their own gender, their own place in our world, and not necessarily how they contribute to those systems, but just how they play into it and how it even affects their lives today.

Every time that I train I tell people that queerphobia, transphobia, and other systems of oppression, they affect everybody, not just trans and non-binary people or queer people. But, it affects even cisgender and straight people, who feel that they can only express themselves to a certain limit, or that they can't be curious, they can't even explore themselves, even, too, because of these rigid lines and these rigid understandings. So I just like to get people to really think about how this affects everyone, and we go back to childhood and talk about experiences, playing with toys or dressing up, you know, why do you feel uncomfortable even walking over to the other side of the clothing store to the opposite gender section. [Tuck: mhmm] Like why is it even uncomfortable? Why is it uncomfortable for men to even think about putting on a dress, or for women to think about dressing up more masculine? These are things that I just get people in my audience to start thinking about how it just holds them back as well.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. So, as you mentioned earlier, you are the executive director of the Nonbinary and Intersex Recognition Project, so can you tell me how you got involved with that organization and what the goals are?

**Addison:** Yeah, for sure! So our organization is called the Nonbinary and Intersex Recognition Project, we are still going by Intersex and Genderqueer Recognition project, but we will be really sharing our new name and going more public with that new name starting in July, so keep an eye out for our website updates and everything too. I've been involved in the organization since 2017. I started off with doing social media posts and management and serving as an advisor for the organization. And this started really when we were lobbying here in California for SB 179 which allows for X to be a third gender option on state IDs, [Tuck: mhmm] birth certificates. And that bill also eliminated the requirement for a medical note or something from a doctor saying that this was medically necessary to have your gender updated on your ID. So we got rid of that surgical and medical requirement, which now makes it really easy for trans and non-binary people here in the state of California to update their IDs and gender markers to male, female, or X for non-binary or intersex.

So I got involved in 2017 and then over the past few years I've been involved just as an advisor in helping out when needed and then late last year back in October or November we had a discussion and realized that we wanted to make some significant changes to the organization. And the main part was is that we were, at the time, being led by a cisgender, binary woman so someone who is not intersex and not non-binary, who was leading the organization and we wanted someone that was going to be representing the organization as a non-binary and/or intersex person. We had a vote, I ended up being chosen and voted it into the position and I’ve been serving as executive director ever since!

**Tuck:** I would never ask this in any other context other than an explicit gender podcast where you’ve consented to answer questions [Addison laughs] but do you identify as intersex? Or is this just like an interest from being a part of this organization?

**Addison:** So, the organization, we focus on non-binary and intersex issues and experiences and there's oftentimes a lot of overlap, but I do not identify as intersex but I do identify as non-binary, and the goal is that we want to have more representation within the organization at all levels. And hopefully, at some point when we have a bit more money so that we can pay our staff including myself, [laughs] we would hopefully be able to replace myself and some of our executive team too, with more intersex and non-binary people, especially those of color, of immigrant experiences, with disabilities, and more, at those intersections that are so important to be represented within the organization.

**Tuck:** Yeah absolutely. So, you were talking about goals that this group has been able to achieve, what are goals that your team is looking forward to tackling now and in the future?

**Addison:** Absolutely! So there's over 14 States right now that do have third gender options for State IDs and that may or may not include birth certificates and death certificates, so we're going to continue pushing for legislation across the country to have third gender options. And, we’ll continue working with other intersex advocacy organizations to write, lobby, and successfully pass legislation across the country to end invasive surgeries against intersex youth. And, as you and listeners may know as well, that many intersex youth experience unconsensual surgeries as babies or infants and may be even subject to hormone therapy at really young ages because they show or have some physical characteristics of being intersex. And it’s all around this fear that intersex characteristics are unhealthy, or that something's wrong with the child, and it ends up leading to a lot of shame, stigma, and physical pain after these surgeries and hormones, too.

**Tuck:** So you work with Break the Binary, you work with the NIRP, you also mentioned that you're the co-director of History Reimagined, and I'm not sure what that is so could you talk about that?

**Addison:** Yeah for sure! So in addition to the trainings that I do, and consultation work I do with Break the Binary, I've actually also been part of this fellowship opportunity with Blue Shield of California since 2018. And, we were selected, it was me and about 16 other domestic violence prevention advocates, in the state of California, we were selected and brought together in April 2018 to start working and developing ideas that were innovative, that were unheard of, that were new and exciting, as prevention strategies for domestic violence in the state of California. History Reimagined was my team's idea of a domestic violence prevention strategy. We formed it out of this study that we found from 2013, and it looked at the results of work, research work, that was done in 2001. In this study 49 families were brought together from all over New York and they asked youth in the families’ questions about their family history, from “where did your grandfather live,” to “where did your mother work,” to yaddah yaddah yaddah, so on and so forth. And what the study found, was that youth who knew more about their family and community history, random facts both positive or negative, whether it's trials and tribulations, successes or challenges, the more that they knew about their family history and community history, they were more confidence in how they navigated the world, and more resilient to trauma. So, History Reimagined, we created this concept of a school-based curriculum in which students: one, learn more about grounding techniques and meditation in order to be more grounded and mindful and resilient in their ways. Two, are able to connect with their family and community history by doing research, and learning, and talking to their families with really specific questions and ways of getting that history. Three, they would then share that with each other and develop really awesome, creative methods of storytelling. And then the fourth part is that we would actually have them showcase their history whether it be through a poetry event, or some sort of talent show, or zine. Whatever it be, we would work with them in order to help them story-tell and share that history.

**Tuck:** My brain is immediately jumping to the fact that like I was really only close to one of my parents, and that she was adopted, and so I can imagine that being really difficult for a kid like me, because I always felt really jealous of folks that knew where they came from or knew about their families, but I'm guessing that in that case then you would just learn more about that adopted family or about other people that you consider to be family, I would assume?

**Addison:** Absolutely, yeah. So, they would definitely learn about whichever family you align with or whatever community you align with. And I think that we were recognizing that the youth that we’re specifically trying to work with, which are youth at risk of incarceration within the LAUSD system, that there were experiences of having maybe, a single parent, or being adopted, or having difficulty because of intergenerational challenges, and structural issues, that maybe they can't access a history for whatever reason, that biological history. So we definitely wanted to expand it and get people thinking about “What does family mean? What does community mean?” And when we align ourselves with that history too, we have the freedom of choice to decide which histories we want to align with, in the sense that you can choose that adopted family’s history or look to our queer and trans sisters, [Tuck: mhmm] look at Marsha P Johnson and Sylvia Rivera and say, “Hey, they are my foremothers, I want to learn about them, and make sure that their history is part of my history.” Right? So there's more choice and more freedom, and as queer and trans people, as people from other communities that may not have access to that biological specific history, to really explore other types of histories that bring us confidence and resilience.

**Tuck:** Yeah, that feels really important especially from a queer and trans perspective. So, I want to talk a little bit more about you and your gender if that feels okay.

**Addison:** Yeah, let’s go for it!

**Tuck:** Because you are a trans feminine person and you, (I think still?), have a full beard and I'm wondering what that beard means to you.

**Addison:** Thanks! Yeah, yeah, so after starting to work in the nonprofit world, well, really I started growing my beard last year. It's been a really wild journey. Having been on hormones, and so now having a chest and hips and a softer body as I like to say, having long hair and still wearing makeup and feminine clothing for, as I define them, and then adding on the beard, it's been really interesting to see how other people react, and to see how I reacted too. I’ve definitely experienced a lot more celebration, and at the same time a lot of violence too, whether it be online or in person, and it just makes me think about too, about how when trans and non-binary people are hyper-visible, or seen, it becomes a double-edged sword, right? We experience the acceptance and empowerment and at the same time we're much more vulnerable to violence. So, having a beard has been really freeing for me, I want to say, at the end of the day. I feel like I can look in the mirror and see myself and I'm not trying to form my expression to look like anyone else or following anyone else's footprints. I feel like I'm following my own footprints and making my own, and it's been really, really exciting. At the same time, I do wish I had some representation to give me a little bit more resilience, or to know that I’m not alone in it. But it's still, at the same time, exciting and really rewarding when I get messages from other people out there on the internet through Instagram who say you know, “Hey, thank you for being you because now I feel I have the ability to explore myself more too.” So that’s been really rewarding.

**Tuck:** Is there any representation out there that you feel aligned with whether that is, you know, more formal media representation or someone you follow on Instagram or know in real life that you feel your gender resonates with in that way?

**Addison:** I think the first time I saw representation like the one that I’m expressing right now, I think of Conchita Wurst, she’s an Austrian singer and has gone by this stage persona of Conchita Wurst. I think, I'm not sure if it's a drag name or genderqueer name but really came to the platform I think, and was much more aware, or became much more aware in the media, I think a few years ago, I want to say back in maybe 2013. So anyways the point is that Conchita Wurst was probably my first representation but I also think of the spoken word poet Alok. [Tuck: mhmm] And Alok is someone who I think definitely brings attention to being feminine, and body hair and the politics around hair, with being a feminine, especially transfeminine, non-binary person. So I think that all of that is really, really important and I highly recommend following Alok on Instagram and Facebook.

**Tuck:** You touched on this little bit but that beard does make you much more visibly gender-nonconforming and so how do you weigh the decision to be someone who, you know, is being their true self, being a famous, incredible role model for others, doing exactly what you want to do, and also knowing that that puts you at more risk every time you step out into the world which I guess probably happens less now that we're in this society but you know in in general?

**Addison:** [laughs] Well first of all I’ll say that during COVID-19, staying inside, and even if I have to go outside, I’m wearing a mask, I feel less anxious and less worried about other people's reactions whether that is going to be negative or violent or even positive. At the end of the day you know, I just want to be able to run errands and do things like anybody else without having to worry about how I look bringing attention to how people are going to treat me right? It’s definitely been an interesting experience, all I can say is that when people are navigating how they want to express themselves, it’s to each their own. For me, I definitely experienced a lot of anxiety. I’m definitely overwhelmed sometimes just going out into public spaces being who I am, and I have to take things one day at a time and use my grounding exercises, know that the world may not be designed for someone like me with the expression that I have. But I do have to remember too that there's many people out there that do want to explore their gender identities and explore their expressions, be who they are, and I think there's more hope out there than there is necessarily fear.

I do think too about when me and Ethan, my partner, when we got married back in July of last year. We went on a honeymoon to Puerto Rico, for August, and Ethan and I had been talking a lot about whether or not it would be best for me to shave. And this was also based on a vacation we had gone on earlier in the year back in March, to Las Vegas, where I had had my beard, I was very feminine expressing but I was outside of LA, I was outside of my home. And, in Las Vegas I was actually harassed multiple times and we even went to a LGBT club where the drag queen host pointed me out to everybody and was making fun of me to everyone else on the microphone. [Tuck: mmm] So [laughs] even knowing that those things happen within our own community spaces, whether we’re in our community spaces or outside our community spaces, whether at night or day, out in public or not, that all helped inform how I was going to express myself in Puerto Rico. And I ended up shaving, and presenting in a hyperfeminine way, in order to reduce my anxiety and reduce any chances of violence or resistance. And, thankfully nothing happened when we were there because of that. And it was really upsetting because I felt that at the end of the day that I had done something to survive, but I was also sacrificing part of who I am and how I express myself, you know?

**Tuck:** Yeah, yes, absolutely. I am so sorry that happened to you, and I definitely relate to making compromises for safety, you know, that makes sense it's part of our lives as trans people.

**Addison:** Absolutely. You got it.

**Tuck:** Even though we cannot be safe all the time even in our own communities, I think a lot of us are dealing with a lot of loss about you know, not being able to participate in pride events this year and IRL queer spaces being shut down indefinitely and so I'm just wondering how you are coping with that reality that we're in right now.

**Addison:** I think that for everyone out there if you can find some way to connect with other queer and trans people, or friends, or affirming family members or whoever it is out there that brings you that power and that energy, I highly I suggest figuring that out. For me, something that I've been doing is doing a daily book club with other trans queer people. And we read queer and trans novels, but sometimes its something completely unrelated, and just being able to see each other's faces and do an activity together has been so wonderful. It just feeds my soul and feeds my energy and that need for community. I've also been doing on weekends, I get together with my partner and sometimes a couple friends, we will watch a drag queen show that's live on zoom or on twitch. And, it's just a great way to engage with community, especially in the comment sections, to share that joy together, but also just see those performances and just know that we're still in this all together.

And beyond that I think that for me, just something to feed myself as an individual during this time has been to continue reading books, but to engage in, really, arts and crafts activities. So I’ve been collaging lately, I tried ceramics, I'm going to be getting back into that soon. And, whenever I can, just to dress up for myself. I think that in COVID-19 we all maybe are less inclined to dress up and express ourselves how we really want to, cause we feel like we don't have an excuse to. But, I mean, at the end of the day we shouldn't need an excuse to be and dress up however we want to. So, just trying to find some times in the day where I can put on some makeup, or put on a cute little outfit and just enjoy it, is so rewarding as well.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely I think, it has been really important for me to try to get dressed as my hottest self every day [laughs] even if no one's going to see me [Tuck and Addison laugh], you know, just for my own mental health. But the way we always end the show is by asking, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Addison:** Oof. In my ideal world gender would be just so fun. You know a lot of people talk about, and I've been involved in so many different feminist spaces too where we talked about, a world without gender. But I imagine a world where we have hundreds and thousands of different types of genders and expressions, and everything is celebrated, everything is affirmed and people just get so, so creative with it. So I want a world where gender is fun, and open, and fluid.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music plays]

**Tuck:** That's gonna do it for this week's show. If you learned something or you had a good time, please share this episode with folks in your community. You can find Addison's work at intersexrecognition.org, at breakthebinaryllc.com and on Instagram @breakthebinary. You can find us at genderpodcast.com and on social media @gendereveal, I’m also on there @tuckwoodstock. If you're looking for a community of trans people and other like-minded folks to hang out with during what I'm pretty sure is still a global pandemic, we've got a beautiful group of almost a thousand folks at bit.ly/genderslack2 that would love for you to join them. Also, don't forget that you only have mere hours left to grab whatever you want for our Pride merch collection that's at bit.ly/gendermerch, and if you want to support the show you can do that at patreon.com/gender, but please know that the rewards are still delayed so it may be a hot minute before you get your stickers or pins or thank-you note or box of stuff or whatever you signed up for. So sorry about that, it is the first thing I'm going to do when the season wraps. Thank you for your support and your patience. Today's episode was produced and edited by me, Tuck Woodstock, our logo is by the wonderful Ira M. Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. We'll be back real soon with more feelings about gender. Happy Pride, and throw a brick at a cop.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music end]