**Tuck:** American Hysteria is a podcast that explores moral panics, conspiracy theories, urban legends and fantastical thinking and how they have shaped our culture and politics from the puritans to the present. After 3 seasons, American Hysteria has covered topics ranging from the Illuminati to the gay agenda, and yes that does involve Tinky-Winky. Using sociology, psychology, biology, and storytelling, host, Chelsey Weber-Smith, is a non-binary poet turned podcaster who takes you down our strange American wormholes presenting forgotten oddities of history and examining modern events and pop culture to illuminate our long, complicated path to our present moment.

Sometimes hilarious, sometimes horrifying, and sometimes even heartfelt, American Hysteria wants to understand why we fear the wrong things and believe in false realities, and what social issues these distractions act to cover up. The fourth season will cover America's vehicles of hysteria like true crime, televangelists, trash talk shows, disneyfication, and horror movies. So, subscribe to American Hysteria now wherever you get this podcast.

[*Gender Reveal* theme song plays]

**Tuck:** Welcome to *Gender Reveal*, a podcast where we hopefully get a little bit closer to figure out that the hell gender is. I'm your host and resident gender detective, Tuck Woodstock.

[*Gender Reveal* theme song ends]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone, I hope you're all hanging in there. I know this week has been really rough for a lot of folks, and while it doesn't fix systemic racism, I am happy to say that we were able to distribute fourteen-hundred dollars ($1400) in mutual aid, on venmo, on the 17th to Asian-American trans folks who needed a little extra boost right now. Thank you to everyone who chipped in for that.

Anyway, this week on the show, we're sharing my conversation with author and scholar Francisco J. Galarte. His new book, *Brown Trans Figurations*, explores the intersections of Chicanx and Transgender studies. Francisco and I talk about when to use the “x” in Latinx, what masculinity even means, and why hate crime laws don’t necessarily help trans people of color.

[Content Warning] Please note that this episode does frequently acknowledge the existence of hate crimes, violence, transphobia, and murder. Do what you need to take care of yourself this week.

But before we get to that interview, just a couple of quick reminders. First, you have just one week left to shop our march merch collection at [bit.ly/gendermerch](http://bit.ly/gendermerch). As always all proceeds benefit trans people and trans organizations and If you’d like to support our work, including our grant program, you can join us at [patreon.com/gender](http://patreon.com/gender) where $10 gets you a hand written thank you note filled with stickers and pins from me! We have two Theymail messages this week. Theymail is a program where listeners like you can buy a little ad on the show for just so much less than an ad would actually cost.

So, our first message is from the Galaxy Community Circle, who writes “Trans kids deserve affirmation, connection, community and most of all, joy. That is why Galaxy Community Circle exists; offering weekly online meetups filled with books, songs, chat, and play for gender diverse kids between the ages of 4 and 9. Find out more at [galaxycommunitycircle.org](https://www.galaxycommunitycircle.org/) or check us out on Instagram at @galaxycommunitycircle.”

Our second message is from Em, who writes “[*Person Who*](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFcw2u9dQv20RjCwkDzafMA) is a new YouTube show about my trials and tribulations as a non-binary trans person with a heavily gendered first language, Czech. With its complex and rigid grammatical structure tied to binary gender, Czech makes it borderline impossible to express anything without gendering everyone in the process. The first few episodes are up now and I’ll be exploring many more intricacies of this issue soon. Check out [*Person Who*](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFcw2u9dQv20RjCwkDzafMA) on YouTube.”

All those links will be in the show notes and with that it’s time for This Week In Gender.

[Bells chime melodically and transition into gentle music.]

Tuck: Hey Y’all, I’m gonna be honest, I really do not want to talk about any of the trending stories about trans people this week, and yet here we are.

As you know, I confounded a consulting company with unofficial Gender Reveal producer Cassius Adair. It’s called Sylveon Consulting and as part of that work, I give presentations to journalists about how they can improve their stories and as part of that, I list the tropes I most frequently see in stories about trans people. I won’t spoil them all because it's my job but, the list includes 1) opening your story with a trans person doing gender performance. This could be a trans woman putting on make-up in the mirror or a trans man putting on a binder or cutting his hair. 2) Focusing on physical or medical transition as the main element of being trans. 3) Sharing photos of the trans person when they were a child, pre-transition. And 4) Using transition as a plot because, as my friend and co-founder Cass says, genders aren't plots so you should be able to take transition out of the story and still have some there there. We talk about this topic a lot in my interview with Kai Cheng Thom, earlier this season.

I literally use quotes from that interview about this in my lectures, so I do recommend you check that out if you haven’t and are interested in this topic, but what what I was trying to say then, and I’m saying now, is that these tropes exist and deploying them doesn't make you a bad person, and it doesn’t make you canceled, but it does make you just very boring. Because this story has already been written dozens and actually hundreds of times to the point that people like Kai Cheng can close their eyes and tell you the beats of any given trans story written for a cis audience. I am begging news outlets and publishers to hire more trans writers because we simply will write more interesting articles, especially more interesting articles about gender, and spoiler: everything is about gender. When is the last time you read any story and there wasn't a single gender in it?

Throughout 92 episodes of this podcast I hope I’ve shown you that you can tell stories about trans people without ever talking about gender performance or medical transition, or childhood, or transition at all, and when you do talk about those things, you can make them more interesting than asking “did you ever feel born in the wrong body?” or “when did you know you were trans?” or “do you ever wear pants?”, an actual question that Terry Gross, who is celebrated nationwide as one of the best interviewers of our time -- she asked Sarah McBride that in 2018.

[Audio clip of the interview plays of Terry Gross asking the question “do you ever wear pants”]

[Gentle music fades back in]

Tuck: I understand that not everyone in this country has a comprehensive understanding of trans topics. Some people might need a little bit of background information. That’s totally ok and understandable, but at some point we need to challenge our audiences to level up their knowledge a little bit. We don’t explain the rules and regulations of basketball every time we talk about the NBA, we don't provide a recipe every time we mention cake, and we shouldn’t need to re-explain the concept of gender dysphoria every time we talk to a trans person.

Anyway, there’s a profile of Elliot Page in Time Magazine, a lot of people liked it.

This has been This Week in Gender.

[Chimes play and transition into the *Gender Reveal* theme song]

Tuck: Francisco J. Galarte is an assistant professor of American Studies and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of New Mexico, where he teaches courses in Chicanx, Latinx, and Transgender studies. He was recently appointed the director of Feminist Research Institute at University of New Mexico and serves as one of the co-general editors at TSQ, Transgender Studies Quarterly. His first book, *Brown Trans Figurations: Rethinking Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Chicanx/Latinx Studies* explores how transgender analytics intervene ,or fail to intervene in the current reading practices that exist in Chicana or Chicano studies for making sense of processes of racialization, gendered violence, queer sexualities, masculinities, and femininities, and yes I will ask what that means in the interview.

[*Gender Reveal* theme song ends]

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

FJG: In terms of gender, I describe myself as a trans man/trans guy. Chicano is always kind of -- er Chicanx is the other kind of marker I attach to both so I tend to use, y’know trans/Chicanx...

Tuck: Yeah, in your website bio you write that you identify strongly as a transfronterizo. I would love to hear you talk about what that identity means to you and how it informs the work that you do? I know that’s a really broad question but--like, a little bit. [Tuck laughs]

FJG: Yeah, totally. For me, transfronterizo is a way that I make sense of being someone who grew up in very close proximity to the US-Mexico border and so the frontera (the border), and that life, and the constant mobility, and motion and you know, of essentially the transness/transition of it informed who I am and the work that I do. Then also being trans myself, it just kinda works to think about the border in kind of trans ways and I think of myself as a product of being trans and from the border, and so I think that makes its way into what I’m interested in, and how I approach things, and how I move through the world and also kind of my embodied history and so I think transfronterizo is a way that I try to describe that experience to folks.

Tuck: So, you have degrees in Chicano/Latino studies, political science, educational policy studies-- Can you talk about when and how you got involved in transgender studies?

FJG: Yeah, of course. I think the more obvious answer to that question is in graduate school when I was working on my PHD. That’s when I started to transition myself so my interest really kinda shifted from doing work on more Chicana-butch cultural practice and performance because I, at the time of my Masters, identified as a Chicana-butch and then, as I started transitioning of course, I was digging into trans studies and found one professor at University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, Dr. Fiona Ngô who was teaching the class in trans studies and took that class, then kinda dug in on my own.

I think the longer answer to that is that I probably always had an interest in trans studies in the way that I was reading things like Chicana feminism, the texts that I felt were very key to my development, I think I was reading them in trans ways. So I guess that I’d want to say that my earliest introduction to trans studies was probably reading Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* as an undergraduate.

Tuck: We’ll talk more about your book in a second, but I just want to jump ahead because you talk in your book about the butch/FTM borderlands. I’d love to hear more about the way those borderlands existed when you were first transitioning vs now and if you feel like they've changed some way?

FJG: It’s funny that because I just got asked a question by a student when I visited a seminar and he was like, “Y’know, I have a lot of friends who are trans men and they have friends who are butches and it doesn't seem to be a problem, or there’s any disagreement or that kind of a turf war.” and I think that in this moment it's not so obvious as it was in the 90’s or at least what I was trying to document and it wasn’t even necessarily a turf war or even a tension but just a misrecognition between both communities in different types of ways and I think that we still don’t really have conversations about what masculinity looks like in various types of embodiments, especially racialized transmasculine embodiments and butch embodiments. We don’t have conversations about what the differences are, what the affinities are, and I do think the world at large really kinda presumes, to quote Judith Halberstam, that masculinity is somehow kind of a limited resource.

So I do think that that really kinda marks our society, that kinda assumption about masculinity, and so I think that a border war, kind of that territory, of that misrecognition that’s happening between butches and FTM’s, I think it still happens at some degree because I think that we just don’t have conversations about masculinity because on the one hand masculinity is something that is consistently, I don't want to say under attack because I do think that masculinity needs to be interrogated but I think that were a lot more careful about what those conversations might look like in this particular moment.

Tuck: Yeah, well let's talk about masculinity a little bit, because I definitely have a number of listeners to this show who have sort of gone down the gender rabbit hole and they’re like, I don’t even know what femininity and masculinity even mean anymore. Like they’re meaningless to me and I don’t understand it. So can you talk a little bit about when you talk about masculinity, specifically Chicano/Chicana/Chicanx masculinities, what you're talking about?

FJG: Yeah, for sure. For me it's just really kinda culturally oriented in relationship to these dominant markers of masculinity that we see in realms of representations. So, I'm thinking about lowrider culture and pachuco culture and these very historical representations of masculinity that are really really loaded and so for me when I'm thinking of what masculinity means and how of Chicana butches or how Chicano FTMs and even, to a certain extent, I think folks who are nonbinary but are more masculinely leaning, I think that masculinity has to take a different shape or form and I think that the language we have for masculinity or at least talking about racialized masculinity needs to be expanded in a particular way, and what I mean by that is that the performance of masculinity and the embodiment of masculinity is one thing on the one hand and then also interrogating the bad things, the bad parts about masculinity which is things like the hetero-patriarch, which is all this insidious, oppressive ways that masculinity is wielded.

I think that there is a way or that we the facility, at this time, to really just aggregate the insidious parts of masculinity that are really rather harmful to queer and trans folks but that queer and trans folks can begin to lean into those historical markers and figures of masculinity to really reshape what that means and really kind of rewrite what a racialized kind of Chicanx, especially specifically Mexican-American masculinity is.

Tuck: So you wrote in your bio that your book, *Brown Trans Figurations*, explores how transgender analytics intervene or fail to intervene in the current reading practices that exist in Chicano/Chicana Studies for making sense of processes of racialization, gendered violence, queer sexualities, masculinities, and femininities. Could you break this down, what your work is in layperson’s terms?

FJG: yeah, for sure. So for me, for the book, or what my interest in trans studies and both Chicanx studies is really at the level of thinking about all of these common tropes that circulate around trans people. Like the two dominant tropes or assumptions about trans people, or ideas that we tend to attach to trans people is that trans women are deceivers, and they’re culpable for their deaths when they die, and also that trans women of color are hyper visible and also kind of expendable at the same time. And then the other kind of assumption around trans masculinity is that it's invisible, that trans men don’t exist, or they do but they're very clearly folded into normativity.

We don't know that trans men are trans unless there's a particular announcement of that. What the project does is that I really want to interrogate these assumptions might work in the lives of trans people who are of Chicanx/Mexican-american backgrounds. What I wanted to do is I wanted to show how these dominant ideas or tropes about trans people in a broader context, there's a lot more to talk about around the stories of these folks or these figures when we begin to think about it in terms of race. In the book I talk about a couple of murders of two trans Latinas, Gwen Araujo and Angie Zapata, and what I wanted to do is I wanted to really, kind of dig into everything I that could find out about their lives while they were alive and then how in representation, the stories, or the their narratives, get used to push LGBT rights, activism, around hate crimes.

This is not something new, other people have done it, but what makes it new about my work is that for Gwen Araujo, I really looked at how she is kind of put up against her mother as a racialized woman of color, right? So her mother is pathologized in similar but different ways in the representation of her life in the film *A Girl Like Me*, and for Angie Zapata I looked at the violences that systematically affected her family after her death, in terms of how much the afterlife of the violence of her death affects the family, and also I place Angie’s life in the geopolitical context, like she lived in a place that was really anti-Mexican and so when the jury is selected for the trial of Allen Andrade, the man who murdered her, it was an all-white jury and they convicted him within two hours and so the district attorney heralded that and took a lot of political credit to say that it was a signal that the community values someone like Angie Zapata and for me I just think there's more there.

I don't think that they so much valued Angie Zapata but rather they really hated a Mexican-american man or thought someone like him, who was formerly incarcerated, deserved to continue to be incarcerated. So to show how nativism and racism worked in this sense to continue to incarcerate men of color and doesn't really get us anywhere close to understanding why men kill trans women of color, especially in racialized contests; especially in situations where they are romantically linked or intimate.

Tuck: Yes, you write “The successful application of a hate crimes law is impossible without the murder of a trans woman of color, an evil deceiver, and the incarceration of a hateful other, a man of color” and I think you do a really good job in the book of explaining, for folks who aren’t familiar, the “evil deceiver” and “hateful other” tropes but can you talk about it here for folks who haven’t had a chance to learn about that?

FJG: Yeah, for sure! The “evil deceiver” term is one that was coined by Talia Mae Bettcher, who is an amazing trans philosopher at Cal State LA. In her essay she writes about how trans women are kinda figured as these evil deceivers. Society at large, who is not friendly to trans people and embodiment, consider trans women not to be women so there's already kind of an inherent deception. In that essay that she writes about Gwen Araujo, she adds that for Gwen Araujo, as a Mexican-american woman, there's already an existing tropes, and I fleshed this out a little bit more, about how Mexican women themselves, trans or not, are already kind of conceived as excessive and prone to deception in the sense that, in Mexican-american culture, women themselves are suspected of deception if they are not good mothers, if they are not good women, and Chicana feminists have fleshed that out in different types of ways and I picked up on their work and so, y’know, this idea that racialized of women of color are doubly deceptive and are looking and preying for these unknowing men to deceive them and to fool them and so they’re deserving of whatever kind of violence they are made to bear.

And the “hateful other” is a way that we can talk about men of color and those who are kind of thought of as preconceived as inclined to violence, especially transphobic and homophobic violence, and so often it’s men of color who fall into these categories because there’s an assumption that men of color are so heteropatriarchal, so wedded to the binary around gender and sexuality, and they are inclined to enact this type of violence. I think there's a way -- that there's an assumption that it’s almost biological, that it’s this uncontrollable impulse, that if you are in a situation where you are faced with a gay person, someone who’s lesbian, someone who’s trans, that these men are just inclined, kind of biologically programed in some ways, to attack or to enact a hateful act or to be violent towards this and so in the book I look at how the “hateful other” and the “evil deceiver”, how those tropes play out against each other.

Tuck: Let’s build off of that. So you mentioned, a couple questions ago, how the needs and lives of trans women of color contrast with the work of mainstream LGBTQ groups and so I would love to talk a bit more about how you write about trans Latinas, who’s deaths are used as tools for mainstream LGBTQ groups without them being fully humanized themselves, and obviously that’s something that we still see today in so many instances of trans women of color being props of the trans movement without actually being fully humanized within the trans movement. So, can you talk a little bit about what you’re talking about in those passages?

FJG: In those passages it's -- Where I draw that out is a chapter on Angie Zapata because as soon as Angie passes away, of course, we have lgbt groups who come in to draw attention to the murder to be there for the family, to support the family. So on the one hand I want to give credit to these groups for doing that support work but that support work is also about controlling the narrative in some ways too. And so the narrative here is that these families are gonna be used to put their loved one’s story forward to secure a law that is not designed to make the people who it’s supposed to protect feel safe. So with the hate crimes law, like the federal one, the Mathew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Federal Hate Crimes Act-- This act is really really hard to enforce.

The money that's set aside for it-- it's not easy for small jurisdictions to access and so it really doesn't do that work of giving money to police stations or policing to be able to solve crimes. For me and my understanding is that hate crimes act is purely representational, especially if we think about the two figures that are attached to it. Like one is Matthew Shepard of course, the story that we all know, and then James Byrd Jr is this African-American man who was dragged behind a truck and it was a hate crime, a racially motivated hate crime. So the law itself doesn't -- it hasn't been proven to curb any kind of further hate violence because we see it every year, so many trans women of color are murdered.

On the other hand it extracts from the family, like in and how Angie Zapata’s family was used in all of these media campaigns, and how a senator was speaking about Angie's death on the senate floor just really kind of further reenacts and reanimates that particular moment, and then at the same time figures like Angie Zapata, like racialized women of color, and their perpetrators, Allen Andrade-- this particular case really kind of hit all the buttons in the sense that Allen Andrade said really horrible things about Angie that were recorded on his phone calls with his girlfriend and they circulated in the media and the press and so this really kink of helped prop up this kind of figure of the hateful other, but on the other side, the DA, who prosecuted the case, already had an existing agenda that was related to wanting to clean up gang violence and things like this.

So for him he was more interested in making an example out of a representational kind of gang member who has links to all of these gang members that are supposedly coming from central America and Mexico and really changing the shape of this town, in this small town of Colorado and so when we think about the passage of a law that's only going to criminalize populations of color and even members of that population, because hate crimes laws can also be applied to trans and queer people, and trans and queer people and men of color -- people of color, are the ones who interface with police and policing the most so it only further puts these populations at risk to become incarcerated so were thinking about this in terms of abolitionist perspective, the idea wouldn’t be to make a law that’s going to further incarcerate these marginalized populations, but rather figure out some of the solutions around how to be restorative in punishment when there’re situations like this, and restorative is not only for the person who was harmed, Angie Zapata who isn’t living, but it’s also her families to -- their families, the people who lose these loved ones, because Angie’s family is working class, And in the case of Gwen Araujo, her mother, Silvia Guerrero, has not been able to have a job since that murder of her daughter. It’s had an incredible impact economically, financially on her life and so these representational laws that seek to further incarcerate and criminalize really do nothing for those of us who are members of those communities.

Tuck: So, backing up a few decades, your work talks about early gender clinics like the Stanford Gender Clinic and how they were only accessible to transsexuals who fit a certain cultural criteria, which excluded most brown trans people. Do you think that that gatekeeping is part of the reason why so many trans spaces today, at least that I run into, are still so overwhelmingly white or do you think there are other explanations for -- I mean obviously there are other explanations, but do you think that that gatekeeping still impacts trans spaces today I guess is my question.

FJG: I think that it’s the medical establishment in general. I think that, as we know, accessing care as a trans person -- it's just so intrusive and I think for people of color, at least the figure that I talk about, had contact with a gender clinic, not on his own. It wasn't something that he sought out, he was forced to have contact with this psychiatrist who recommended that he have surgery. He falls into contact with these psychiatric institutions because he’s arrested and I think that that sends a really important message to think about who has access to care, trans healthcare, how extractive that process is.

It’s extractive and dehumanizing for everyone who is trans but then there are folks who are working class or racialized and navigate get that system in different registers I think and so coming together in trans spaces or purely singular issue trans space without really grappling with other systems of oppression, it might not be the place in which they are seeking to find community because trans for some folks might just be purely about embodiment and what you’re doing with your body as opposed to the political and cultural in terms of trans history and trans politics, that might be disconnected for some folks and think for some people of color who unfortunately don’t have access to larger historical/cultural productions and things like that.

I’m not saying it's because they can't seek them out but because it's a privilege to be able to pick up a book or a text or to watch a film about certain types of things whereas some folks don’t have the money to have access to even Netflix or HBO or where you’re having more of a cultural moment and have access to documents and texts that we can consume and listen to or read and some don’t and so I think that single issue spaces that just revolve around one particular identity are going to be a turn off to some racialized subjects but then on the other hand, to push back on some of that, in the 90’s when Lou Sullivan’s FTM newsletter was still circulating alive and well there was a significant representation of trans people of color who were in that space to have the space to talk about what being trans was in the 90’s. So there’s different cultural moments or different times, in regards to what's happening in the world and our economy, I think also dictates those shifts in the end in terms of who-- what identify folks might want to center in terms of having space or having community or things like that.

Tuck: Well let’s keep talking about race because you were a part of the University of Arizona’s famous transgender studies research cluster in the founding of *Transgender Studies Quarterly*. I would love to hear your experiences with that but my first question is if you knew from the start how white that founding cohort was and how that affected the way that you approached that?

FJG: Susan Stryker and I got there in 2011 at the same time. I was an adjunct professor and Susan was just hired to direct the institute for lgbt studies, and Susan was very quick to bring me into what she was trying to do and so I was actively involved in the searches of the other folks that were in the cluster as soon as I was hired as an assistant professor through a different program on campus. And so, one thing that I will say is that when I was looking at those applications at that time, there just weren't a lot of trans people of color who were doing the work, and I think we know that’s for a lot of reasons because, access to higher education is not something that our country in particular is good at for anybody and then for trans people of color, undocumented trans folk, it going to be very hard to survive and navigate academia and graduate school because it's just not designed for the survival of people of color in general, and then I think for trans folks even less so.

But fast forward almost 10 years since when I got to Arizona, the amount of readings and the amount of work by trans scholars of color that is coming to the journal, it’s invigorating and I think that it’s really beautiful and so I think that the field is doing its best to do right by cultivating and soliciting and supporting, and on my part I want to do my best to mentor other trans scholars of color to put the work out to the world and to thrive with their intellectual and political contributions to trans studies.

Tuck: Yeah, I’m so glad that you were involved directly in that and I understand that there just wasn't a lot of diversity in candidates because of the inaccessibility of academia, among other things, but I am still just gonna push you a little bit. I don’t know, it's just like, for me, I don't like being the least white person in a space and I think it holds back my work because I like to be able to collaborate with people with a certain lens. So I’m just curious if it was ever difficult in that experience in the early days?

FJG: Yeah, yeah, I mean, it was difficult. On one hand I had a lot to talk about with folks because they're trans and I’m trans but there’s also just a point where things kinda hit a stop. I mean, I am someone who's really versed and situate myself really strongly in Chicanx and Latinx studies, so there's a way that my peers weren’t always able to follow me in some of the jumps and leaps that I was trying to do in terms of how I might understand transgender studies. So it was a lot of pushing my colleagues to think through the ideas and the frames that I was wanting to work through, and then also at the end of the day, at the practical level, for me to live in Tucson, Arizona, which is a pretty nativist -- a pretty anti-Mexican place, I had my own unique experiences in relation to that that were different from some of the experiences that my white trans colleagues had in the area, for sure.

Tuck: Yeah, so you have been involved with TSQ and have been involved with trans studies over this entire decade of this explosion in mainstream visibility of trans people, which clearly pains me to even say because it's so much more nuanced than that -- but when this started happening, was it something that in 2011 or so, y’all could see coming that there was going to be this increased interest in trans topics, mainstream, or was that something that took y’all by surprise?

FJG: I think it was coming. I think it was time. I think that what really surprised me was the amount of jobs that opened up in academia that were women's studies departments or that departments were also looking for scholars in trans studies. Folks really followed the lead that we took at the University of Arizona with the cluster hire, for sure. in academia itself that was actually really surprising, but culturally, in terms of films/texts it was beautiful to see and I think Janet Mock and when her autobiography came out, I think this was really the tip of things and then soon after that we had so many other kinds of amazing cultural moments that congealed, or came around, trans women of color specifically that it was inevitable I think.

Tuck: Yeah, so clearly, during this movement of increased trans visibility, as we mentioned, trans women of color/black and brown trans women have so been hypervisible, in great ways like in that Janet Mock’s autobiography was a huge success, Laverne Cox has been really wonderful, Pose has been wonderful, but also trans women of color are still the most at risk, partially because they're the ones who are the most hypervisible. What do you think it looks like in the near future for trans women of color? Is there a way we can move past this hypervisibility, but also hyperdangerous, stage into something that's more livable for black and brown trans women?

FJG: Yeah, I think that folks who are doing mutual aid work and that kind of support, I think that's probably the biggest place where change can actually be made to impact trans women of color’s lives. I’m not a trans woman of color obviously but I have so many that I watch in their activism, like Bamby Salcedo who’s the president of the trans Latina coalition. She’s an inspiration to me because she continues to advocate at the state level, [and] at the federal level for bringing resources to trans women of color that are really going to materially affect their lives.

I think that representation is important, so shows like Pose and things like that do change and impact perspectives of how we understand history and hypervisibility but at the end of the day I think pushing legislators to dedicate resources, pushing the Biden administration to release all the LGBT migrants who are being held in ice detention, those are the big improvements that I think we need to work on and doing that type of advocacy work that folks like Bamby Salcedo and other organizers do at the political level, and then the everyday, day to day mutual aid work that folks do in their own communities are the way to do it and for educational institutions like-- I ethically and politically, I would never want to offer a graduate degree in trans studies unless I’m going to have a way to fully fund trans women of color to get a degree in that for free.

That's my own position on trans studies and higher education and what the project can do. I don't think that these communities should be forced to go into debt in order to access a degree so they can get paid more, etc. etc. Finding ways to fund them, finding ways to support them in that way is the way to go.

Tuck: So, your book is called *Brown Trans Figurations: Rethinking Race Gender and Sexuality in Chicanx and Latinx Studies* and I’ve heard you say Chicanx a lot today. Inside the book you don't use the “x” that much until the coda. Y’know we used a lot of Chicano/Chicana because that's who you’re talking about. I'm curious if you could talk about when, to you, it feels appropriate to use the “x” and when it's not appropriate?

FJG: In the book, I think I was trying to be very clear and explicit about the project of marking something as an “a” or the “o”, Chicana/Chicano, both to really kind of push at the boundaries of that term and also to acknowledge that there are trans folks who really, really stake claim to the categories of woman and man and the “x” doesn’t always get at how they might understand themselves and how they might navigate the world so to speak, but the “x”, I think, really opens up the language in a different type of way and so I tend to try to use it in most concepts except when I talk about a time period that was before the “x” began to circulate or if I’m talking about someone who I know definitely doesn't use the “x”, but generally I do try to use the “x” as much as I can to refer to Chicanx community/ Latinx community to be inclusive and to continue to push folks in those communities, in my communities, to really kind of interrogate gender in relation the the language that they use.

Tuck: Yeah so, anytime anyone on the internet, I feel, says Latinx, especially in a headline--especially in the media, groups all folks as Latinx, I see straight cis Latinos online being like “Latinx is something being imposed upon us by white people who want to be woke and I don’t know a single real Latino who has ever said Latinx” and I’m always like “well are you queer?” and they’re like “No” and I’m like “Ok” but I also understand that they’re pushing back on not just queer people being called Latinx, but people, sometimes white people/non-Latinx white people, using Latinx sort of like a group in a headline. So how does that kind of pushback fit with your views on those topics? Because part of me wants to be respectful of how those people want to be identified and then part of me is really prickling at what I perceive as transphobia and homophobia.

FJG: Yeah, for sure. I think it is transphobia and homophobia hiding under the guise of a racial politic. I think its lazy to say “White people are imposing the ‘x’ on us and wanting us to be -- ruining our language or be gender neutral” and when it comes down to it, these folks have to understand that the “x” is trying to be capacious about gender and is really calling out -- especially these very fragile cis dudes. It's like, masculinity-- the category of men or man is not something that they even probably fully inhabit to their own expectations or the cultural expectations so I don't understand why we’re so wedded to gatekeeping a term that could open up different ways for people to see themselves, to move through the world. That's just lazy to me, to say that it's being imposed from the outside and that people don’t use it, because people do and its using a racial defensiveness and that kind of position is, to me, all about heteropatriarchy and masculinist really kind of messed up toxic masculinity.

Tuck: So talking about that actually reminded me of something that I was thinking about at the beginning of this interview. We were talking about how Chicano and Latino trans men can be figured as impossible and inconceivable, and then you were talking about transitioning in grad school so I’m curious, if you don’t mind talking about it, when being a Chicano trans man felt possible to you?

FJG: I took a break in grad school and went to San Francisco for a little bit and I was able to see other trans Chicano and Chicanx and Latinx and -- welI just said I didn't use Latinx or Chicanx when it was not of this time but I’m trying to be mindful of those people as I know them now and I think that's probably the term that they would use. That's the time when it felt like a possibility and I had a moment where more and more information was popping up online and I felt like I had the resources available to me to be able to do their research in order to advocate on my own behalf and so it was a culmination of seeing others who were live those lives and being inspired by them and being able to, as someone who was living in the Midwest at the time, find the information to educate myself and to be able to educate my health practitioners and navigate that whole process on my own. And so it felt like if I could find the resources to study, then I knew I had the ability to advocate and do the kind of teaching work that we often have to do with health practitioners and psychologists and things like that.

Tuck: So I wanna go back to *Trans Studies Quarterly* for a second because you were the fashion editor there for many years before changing roles and my understanding is that most academic journals do not have fashion editors. So can you talk about how you conceptualized that position and what you were able to explore with it?

FJG: Y’know, I was at the University of Arizona when Susan was starting the journal with Paisley Currah and I knew that she wanted me to be involved and, at that time, I was getting a lot of notoriety on campus for my style and stuff like that, and I did post on Tumblr and Instagram for a little bit and had a presence there in terms of documenting my clothes and my teaching outfits. So Susan was just like “Hey, why don’t we just have a fashion section in the journal. Do you want to do it?” and I was like “Yeah, for sure!”

When I started the section, I wrote an introduction to what I thought the section would be and why fashion matters to trans folks and used a personal narrative there. I talked a lot about my grandmother and my grandmother was a seamstress and that's how she made her living in the small town that I grew up in and linked my appreciation to the craft of the garment and the memories that we attach to garments and link that to embodiment and so in the section I wanted to invite contributions of folks that were thinking about fashion in really broad ways.

So we had contributions that were super literal related to fashion where we published some interviews with trans fashion models and then I featured a trans designer on there and then I also, on the other hand, solicited an essay that a friend was working on where he was writing about sequins, but sequins as archival remnants. So he was talking about this night club in LA called the Rena, there's a lot of Latino LGBT history there and so he wrote an essay that was about excavating memories after somethings been destroyed and so it was about sequins as the point of entry and so was kind of multiple takes on anything really related to fashion, fashioning the body, fashioning the self. So I wanted to be really broad as to what fashion was as far as the creation, the circulation, and then also how it relates to trans life and embodiment in history.

Tuck: As I said, most of our listeners are not scholars or academics. It’s not particularly accessible to them to just go read TSQ, but if these folks are interested in what you’re talking about and learning more about trans studies in related fields, do you have any suggestions for where they might be able to start?

FJG: Yeah, picking up Susan Stryker’s book on transgender history, I think that’s a really good place to start. I think that she provides an amazing history, important snapshots of different moments, but then TSQ -- we recently launched a companion website called TSQ Now which we are using as a format for folks to propose short writings. We’re going to do book reviews related to what’s going on in transgender studies as a field. So that’s a place that I hope will become kind of like that source that bridges the gap between the more academic conversations and then more relevant things that are happening, but with a transgender studies take.

So you don’t have to necessarily understand trans theory fully, hopefully, in order to see what these authors are wanting to say about what’s happening in the field of trans studies and in the world at large. We had somebody who asked if they could organize a cluster of essays around keeping up with the Kardashians and how trans aesthetics and trans womanhood, makeup and clothes and style, and also what the Kardashians do with their bodies is appropriative of how trans women have their embodiments and also how race plays into that. So just kind of these contemporary takes that bring the tools of trans studies to comment on what’s happening in the world.

Tuck: Yeah, that’s so exciting, I didn’t realize that was happening. So I'm thrilled to hear that but also It’s so funny to hear that you mentioned the Kardashians because I was just talking to Tory Peters and she said something about the Kardashians being woman to woman transsexuals so this is just- it's what we’re all talking about now.

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

FJG: My ideal world, the future of gender I think would be a category and a way to be in the world that isn't so fraught. That we wouldn't have so many wars around who gets to do what with their gender. Where we can imagine a present -- we can enact a present and look towards a future where folks can embody the gender and live the gender and have pleasure and all of those good things within how they personally understand gender, without there being a dominant imposition of what gender is supposed to be.

[*Gender Reveal* theme song plays]

Tuck: That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. You can buy *Brown Trans Figurations* from University of Texas Press or request it at your local library. We are on Twitter and Instagram at @genderreveal and at genderpodcast.com where you can find our FAQ page, episode transcripts, and starter packs for new listeners. You can join our newsletter by donating $1 or more at [Patreon.com/gender](http://patreon.com/gender). Our march merch is available through the end of march at bit.ly/gendermerch and our online community is available at <bit.ly/genderslack2>.

Today’s Episode is produced and edited by me, Tuck Woodstock. 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’ll be back next week with our Season 6 Finale, and since you listened this far, I will tell you it features Jeffrey March. So, we’ll see you then with feelings about gender.

[*Gender Reveal* theme end]