**Tuck:** The Bistitchual Podcast is brought to you by John and Kelsey, two crafty, queer comedians. Tune in biweekly for real-life ramblings, Zodiac quizzes, work-in-progress check-ins, and tips, tricks and other fiber tidbits, along with the occasional crafty guest to discuss all things yarn related. Hang out in the Bistitchual Discord server to make new, queer, fiber friends; show off your work; and pop in to the bimonthly Stitch night. Find them on Instagram @BistitchualPodcast or at Bistitchualpodcast.ca.

(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.

(theme music stops)

**Tuck**: Hey everyone, I hope you’re all hanging in there. Welcome to episode 100! Welcome to Cisgender Day of Visibility.

(calm music plays)

As you know we've been making this podcast for three and a half years and other than one or two guests in our first season, all of the folks we spoke with in the first six seasons of the show are trans or nonbinary or two spirit or otherwise not cis. And every time we’d start an episode I’d ask “in terms of gender, how do you identify?” And it started feeling really bad to ask trans people “how they identified” when I wasn’t making cis people answer the same question. So I thought, what if for my 100th episode I asked a whole bunch of cis people to tell me how they identify and what they think gender is. And this idea went through many, many, many iterations in my head over the last several months.

It started out with really strong Ziwe vibes and an intensely chaotic number of guests packed into one episode. It’s ending up being just a touch of Ziwe vibes and a moderately chaotic number of guests, spread out over the next few weeks. The vast majority of our Cis Day of Visibility guests are queer people of color, were not straying too far from our normal fare. But in a grand show of tokenization, I thought we should start our 100th episode extravaganza with a type of person that we’ve never spoken with on the podcast before: that’s right, a straight, cis, white man. And if I was going to talk to a cis, straight, white guy, I figured I should ask someone extremely out of the league of this podcast just to see what would happen.

If you are not familiar with McElroy’s work, I don’t really explain any of it in the interview, so here’s what you need to know. Justin makes so many podcasts, many of which we don’t mention in this episode. We do talk about “My brother, my brother and me” also known as MBMBaM, which is a comedy advice podcast that Justin has made with his brother and his brother since 2010. MBMBaM has a segment called Lunch Squad that talks about weird news from the world of fast food that will come up later. We also talk about “Sawbones” a medical history podcast that Justin has made for eight years now with his wife, Sydney, who is also a practicing doctor. We talk about Justin’s kids’s names, but I never actually say them out loud so they are Charlie and Cooper.

Last but not least we talk about a YouTube series called “Monster Factory” that Justin makes with his brother Griffin. The premise will be actually explained in the episode. If you’re a McElroy fan you might be thinking, “wait, why don’t you talk about the Adventure Zone podcast that has actual trans characters on it?” The honest answer is I ran out of time and I prioritized talking about snacks.

**Justin:** There is no reality where I’m going to announce the most trans snack.

**Tuck:** So what do we talk about in this episode with this straight, cis, white man with so many podcasts other than snacks? Well, we discuss learning how to take feedback, teaching your kids about gender, and building empathy through video games.

**Justin:** That was actually a big step for me, when I had the realization that I can’t make a character in video games that looks like me, that my body, I don’t see in video games. Certainly not as a hero.

**Tuck:** This episode also features a second special guest, friend of the show, Cass Adair who served as producer on this episode and whose voice you’ll hear a few times such as when Justin basically asked us what gender is.

**Cass:** This is the fight that trans people have with each other.

**Tuck:** You might notice that my audio and Cass’ audio sounds kinda rough compared to Justin’s. And yeah, we had some sort of last minute technical snafoo. I had to use my emergency backup recording, and that’s why we make emergency backup recordings but it does kind of sound like I’m in a well. So thank you for your patience, it will be back to normal next time. Ok, I have already talked so much, I will just say that we have limited edition merch at bit.ly/gendermerch with all proceeds going to trans artists and trans organizations and we have transcripts of the show at genderpodcast.com/listen.

There is no “This Week in Gender” segment this week because we’re doing one million interviews instead but we do have a Theymail message and it says, “For those thirsty for smut and romance, “Nectar”, transfemme and non-binary erotic comics anthology is a refreshing cocktail of different experiences on the transfemme and nonbinary spectrum and beyond. With content warnings before each story to help the reader decide if it is too their taste, and at least one own voice contributor on each team. Now live on Kickstarter until August 7.” And now it’s time for Cis Day of Visibility!

(theme music plays)

**Tuck:** Justin McElroy is a podcaster, humorist, oldest brother, and three-time New York Times best-selling author, known for the “Adventure Zone” and “My Brother, My Brother, and Me.”

(theme music stops)

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

**Justin**: Uh, I have, I’m male, male guy, just boring old, regular guy, male guy.

**Tuck:** Yeah, how do you know that Justin, how do you know you’re a boring, old regular guy?

**Justin:** I don’t know, that’s just what I’ve always felt, that’s been my gut. I’ve never, I wouldn’t say I’ve explored it, I haven’t lived a life that has encouraged me to explore that question, I’ll say that. I grew up in the Baptist church, where not only was that not a question to be explored, it was a question, end of sentence. Not an idea that I was introduced to, but that’s just how I’ve always felt. I’ve never considered it, beyond that, how’s that for honesty. I’m going to attempt to be not… [four-second pause] afraid during our conversation.

Because it’s not an unearned fear, I think, and fear is not even the right word, when I started doing stuff, I’d only been exposed to very limited points of view, growing up in West Virginia. And it took me a while, to as we started doing our shows and meeting people from many different perspectives, to start to like- It is hard to make yourself, especially when you’re doing stuff like we’re doing, like podcasting, where it’s just whatever’s right there, someone’s got to be talking on this podcast (laughs) so someone’s got to be talking, the other person stopped talking, oh no I’ve got to start talking, so it is been an exercise that is ongoing to condition those muscles to where I’m actually considering what I’m saying and how it would hit people who are not of the same perspective as me, and it’s something that I’ve run afoul of so many times that I’m not as afraid of it anymore because I’ve gotten so used to being like “time to eat shit again! I messed that up! I got to try again!” But I’m gonna just try to be as honest as I can.

**Tuck:** Yeah, well like Cass and I were talking about this because when I’m getting feedback I can sort of tease out like, oh this is feedback from people in the trans community or the queer community that I trust because I understand these peoples’ perspectives, and I take it really seriously, and I want to do better and then there is some perspective of like, pansexual lesbianism is evil and no kink at pride, and I’m like oh, I don’t care about integrating that feedback because this is a child and I have a more sophisticated analysis of trans studies than they do and I feel comfortable not integrating that. But I feel like if you are getting feedback from all of these fans, including all these queer and trans fans, how do you parse, oh I really goofed it this time versus I’m making a show that millions of people listen to and I’m going to get some negative feedback, and that’s just the way that it is to be a person?

**Justin:** Tuck, I’m so glad that we can finally start talking about the challenges of being me (Tuck laughs) it’s one of my favorite topics and it is a deep well. You know what, it is something that I still have trouble with because I learned early that it’s really important to listen, and it’s really important to take people seriously, especially when you’re hearing from people who are not from your perspective, who are not coming from where you’re coming from, whether it’s sexuality or gender or race or whatever.

But then when you realize that those people are not a hive-mind, that do not speak with one voice, and then it’s like “wait a minute, I can do something that makes one trans person happy and one trans person unhappy, well this isn’t fair! How am I supposed to be an ally now!” (Tuck laughs) This is how the Ben Shapiros start, they’re like “There’s no winning for losing, I guess I’m just gonna be a dillweed, there’s money in that for sure.” That’s why I think fostering those relationships, real relationships, is important because you’re able to take the temperature of people who do have this real life experience that you trust, that you can run it up the flagpole and say help me contextualize this because I don’t have the perspective to be able to discount or affirm or whatever.

So that is the number one thing, to be able to talk to people that you really know, and who know you, and see how it hits with them. It has been extremely helpful for me to not start on the defensive, to try to start on the receptive, which is again a muscle I’ve had to build up over the years, and I’m still trying to get better at it, it doesn’t come naturally. Maybe there’s some people that it does but for me, I think, if you think of yourself as a good person, then when people say that you hurt them, I think that my knee jerk when I was younger was like, I don’t think that’s right, because I’m a good person, so… maybe the disconnect is somewhere else (Tuck laughs) that turned out to be inaccurate. I’ll give you a good example, am I talking too much, I feel like I’m talking too much?

**Tuck:** No!

**Justin:** Ok, on “My Brother, My Brother, and Me”- Hi, I’m Justin McElroy, I do comedy podcasts, I don’t know…

**Tuck:** Oh yeah, we do intros separately but please go

**Justin:** And we did a bit on one of our shows on “My Brother, My Brother, and Me” which is like we were talking about nicknames and I was talking on there about I don’t care what people call me, it doesn’t effect me, call me what you want, it’s not a problem for me, I think it’s silly to get hung up on what other people call you, it’s just a name it’s… so you probably already see the problem (Tuck laughs) Believe it or not, it didn’t occur to me in the moment, because I started hearing people say, actually, if you’re someone who your name has felt like a burden for most of your laugh, and it’s one you’ve tried to unshackle yourself form forcibly, then names are a very big deal. And I was like ok well I mean… So what’s my instinct? My instinct is to be like well I didn’t think of it that way, I was just trying to do a joke for the show, but that doesn’t get you anywhere, that’s no good.

So I had to think, and apologize for people that hit wrong with and try to remember that for the future, that names can be a big deal. And like it’s an uncomfortable, I don’t consider it a burden really because I count myself extremely fortunate and I mean this seriously, I count myself extremely fortunate, that I have people that listen to the stuff I do, and enjoy the stuff I do, that are like willing to do the emotional labor of explaining to a stranger, sharing how a stranger made them feel uncomfortable, and a stranger who has like a big audience, that if he wanted to be a jerk about it could be like, “listen this butthead.”

So it’s got to be an uncomfortable place, but they’re willing to do it and I feel like if someone is willing to do that, is willing to go that far for someone they don’t know in real life, that’s extremely valuable and it’s so flattering, you know? It’s sort of like, not in terms of gravity, but when my computer isn’t working I can get on Twitter and be like “hey, my computer isn’t working” and say to 300,000 people, “help me out.” So I think it’s weird when people are like, who feel that this is a great burden that every word is being scrutinized and I have to… I think wow, that’s a lot of great, free, feedback you’re getting that’s helping you grow at an accelerated rate and become a more aware, complete, kind person.

**Cass:** It’s really interesting to frame that as this free feedback, because corporations literally pay us to yell at them about being shit to trans people and it’s cool that you have like built in, free feedback and it, most people don’t frame that as a resource, so I think that it’s really cool that you’re framing that, cause it’s actually kinda positive, even if I’m getting yelled at by tweens all the time, there’s something I can distill from that, that I can actually learn from.

**Justin:** I think where some people get hung up is like if you’re someone who does think of themselves as trying to do well, and trying to be an ally, and then you get more criticism then the actual creeps, right? And so, there is a part of you that you have to wrestle with that’s like, “go be mean to them! You know what I mean? They’re the actual mean ones. I’m a good, I’m trying, they’re not even trying, go attack them!”

But of course there’d be no point in that, so what you’re expecting is someone to do the work of explaining to a legitimate creep why they’re being a creep for no reason at all, for no benefit whatsoever. So people are talking to you because they think that the effort expended could have some legitimate effect.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I like the sort of continuation of that is that trans people are going to go harder on other trans people then they’re ever going to a single cis person, like we get it too.

**Justin:** Sure

**Tuck:** So we were talking about the ways that I think your fan base has changed the way that you think about what you’re talking about it. I was wondering if you could talk about “Sawbones” specifically, because there was sort of a clear evolution about the way that you were talking about gendered bodies. And I think that talking about gendered bodies is one of the hardest things to do in a trans-inclusive way where you’re ok, there’s this reality where, especially for Sydney, her whole life she’s been like male and female bodies are what I learned in school to be a doctor, and all of a sudden I’m changing all of my language to try and meet the needs of these people. So even though you’re not a doctor part of the equation can you talk about how y’all approach that kind of language?

**Justin:** Yeah, I’ll tell you what was interesting was when we were doing “Sawbones” in 2014 we, Sydney was pregnant with our first daughter, and we were doing a lot of episodes on pregnancy because that’s where both of our heads were at, and where we were naturally sort of drawn to. During the that, and this was 2014, so it was a while back, we started hearing from people that you know, you’re using “women” as a short-hand here when you really mean “people who can become pregnant.” And of course, Sydney as you said, is coming from a perspective where this is how she was taught in medical school, this terminology. I think what Sydney struggled with, and I don’t want to put words in her mouth, but there is a specificity that she doesn’t want to sacrifice, she wants to be accurate in her language, like when she’s talking to a patient, make sure that she is communicating directly, and that being the key thing. I think what really switched it for her, what really opened our eyes, is when we realized that a lot of trans-inclusive language is more accurate and presents a more accurate picture, and a cleaner picture, a clearer picture I should say, than not using trans-inclusive language.

I mean “people who can become pregnant” is more accurate term, a few more syllables and I think what sucks is you run up against the fact that our language that we have is not constructed to be trans-inclusive, so a lot of things feel awkward right? Like Sydney’s sibling Taylor is nonbinary and when our kids, we don’t have a term for that, it’s not aunt, it’s not uncle, we don’t have a term for it. This is where I’m saying, language hasn’t caught up, so a lot of it feels awkward. I’lll say, the longer you use trans-inclusive language I think the more habitual it becomes, it doesn’t feel awkward once you’ve done it for years and years and years and honestly, not using starts to feel like it hits wrong, you can hear it. But it’s not that big of an ask, it’s honestly not, it doesn’t seem as onerous now that we’ve been doing it for a long time, it’s habitual.

**Tuck:** Yeah, it’s that thing of you’re literally recarving the neural pathways in your brain, so first you’re like this is hard and sucks, and then you have those pathways and you’re just like, oh this is how we talk and I think that’s why there’s such a big gap among people who can use they/them pronouns really easily without even thinking about it and people who really struggle with it, like have you been around it long enough that your brain has sort of like retracked because no one my age or your age grew up with they/them pronouns being commonly used. We all had to sort of retrain our brains, it’s just like a matter of when we got the opportunity to do that.

**Cass:** Yeah, whereas, I was at the breakfast table this morning with two five year olds and they had a fight about whether a caterpillar was a they/them or a she/her. (laughter) Like a screaming fight, so like a normal convo for them.

**Justin:** That’s actually been extremely cool for, our daughters are six and three, and they haven’t grown up in a world without, where gender is binary, that’s not the environment they grew up in, the world they’ll be introduced to. And I feel like they’ll be all the better for it, what a more expansive view of the world, I think, for them.

**Tuck:** Yeah, well I had a question about your kid’s names, they’re like so delightfully neutral, like those kids trans in an instant and not have to change their names you’ve given them. Is that something you thought about at all when you were picking names?

**Justin:** Honestly yeah, I mean it was something where, I don’t want to make, I really don’t want to sound like we’re patting ourselves on the back or whatever, because we really do just like the names we picked but we kind of didn’t want to lock them in, like Charlie’s name is Charlie, it’s not short for Charlotte, and I feel like we wanted them to be, they seemed like flexible names to whoever they wanted to be, it would enable that, whoever that turned out to be, they wouldn’t be locked in.

Now our older daughter, Charlie, has already started, it’s funny cause you do this, right, and then you make that decision as a parent and then your kid’s instantly like, “I wish it was Gwendolyn.” (laughter) Ok, I’m sorry, you don’t understand, you may not always wish it was Gwendolyn, if you wish it was Gwendolyn when you’re eighteen, go for it, I don’t care, change it to Gwendolyn, I don’t care. We tried, we tried to give you even footing to start out on.

**Tuck:** When I was a young child I would read “The Babysitter’s Club” and there was a character named Karen, I think maybe the main character, and I told my mom at one point that I wanted my nickname to be Karen and she was like that’s not how nicknames work (laughter). Anyway, and I’m trans now so, I think it’s ok (laughter).

**Justin:** Karen for short! My friends call me Karen.

**Tuck:** Well I was excited, so you don’t need to pat yourself on the back, but I was patting you on the back from afar, good solid names for these children that I’ll never meet and don’t know.

**Justin:** I’ll take the pats, I’ll always take the pats. (laughter)

**Tuck:** I want to ask about Monster Factory cause the premise is kind of like making a character that’s as wild and fucked-up as possible, and somehow not making fun of real people in the process and I think a lot about, there’s a new episode, newer, with the Baby King, and there’s a part where you have to pick a religion, and you were like, ok Griffin, go ahead and pick the funniest religion, and I just think about that sort of struggle to be like, we need to make this funny but then there’s all these places where we also need to not make this the joke.

One of that there is a character, at one point, who is nonbinary, and I was watching it and I was like, I want to be offended by this, but honestly that character who has a beard and a butterfly tattoo looks like all my friends, so I can’t be offended by this, because this is accurate. But again, I’m sort of curious about that balance between ok, the premise is sort of creating a horrific thing but somehow I need to do this without making the joke be like wow this person looks fucked-up whether, like where fucked-up gender is not the joke, you know what I mean?

**Justin:** Yeah, that was, for Monster Factory, we use character creators to make a character that is, I don’t even want to say horrific, challenging? Aesthetically sort of bracing, you know, avant-garde looking person, and figure out how they live in the world, right. It is like literally, I kind of think of Monster Factory as an empathy exercise, where you create something that to you is aesthetically, initially like maybe unpalatable is the word, and like live with that person, and see how quickly, by living with that person, and by watching them move in the world, you develop like something like love and celebration and recognize what this person is in their world.

And it’s constantly sort of challenging that right? And that’s what as an exercise Monster Factory is. It is like immediately trying to find the beauty in something that is initially like aesthetically not beautiful, by traditional standards. And I think our concern from the beginning is that if we make a character where gender is part of that equation we would never, obviously, want it to be like isn’t it funny that they don’t ascribe to the gender binary but like it’s a point where if you avoid that all the time it starts to feel worse by omission, you know what I mean? Like well, listen, if we’re saying that this is not about this, then we should be able to talk about it and in the moment it just felt right, and again, Monster Factory is getting harder. If I’m being completely honest because games continue to be more realistic and it became harder.

We haven’t done one in a while and I don’t know if we will do one again, and maybe we will, hopefully we will, but you start to run out of room when it’s like this person kind of looks like some people, it starts to feel weird, it’s tough. So I don’t know, Monster Factory is in a weird place because I don’t know… the Baby King is a good example, we had a lot of people who were upset by that episode because it felt too close to making fun of, the person looked to real because you couldn’t get buck wild enough with it.

**Tuck:** That makes sense if I think of the aesthetic of Knife Dad, which was a monstrous rat with a guitar on his back and a million knives, nobody looks like that…

**Justin:** Or like Truck Shepard, their face is like exploded into polygons, you know.

**Tuck:** That makes sense.

**Justin:** It’s always tough, it’s a tough one to do and continue to make… we ‘ve also explored a lot of the games that have the flexibility we crave.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I was watching the Baby King episode with my girlfriend who I was recently onboarding onto McElroy content and she was like shocked by how video games are. She was like shocked by how video games are why do video games have all these sliders now, like when I played video games there were like two characters, and now it’s almost like too granular, like oh no there’s like 50 sliders for the nose bridge and I don’t want to pick a funny nose bridge, you know?

**Justin:** We can get 50 sliders for the nose bridge but I still can’t make a body that looks like my body. I still can’t make someone who’s like either not the Hulk or. I can’t just make someone who looks like a person. And that really, this is gonna sound stupid, but I grew up reviewing video games and that was from the time I was a teenager, that’s what I was doing, and continued to do for some 20 years after that. And that was actually a big step for me, when I had the realization that I can’t make a character in video games that looks like me. That my body, I don’t see in video games, certainly not as a hero. You know what I mean? And when I had that realization, stupid insight, but I had this moment of is this how Black people feel, oh wait a minute, so when gay people said they’re not well-represented in media they mean, ok, I’m getting it! That’s what it took, when I couldn’t see myself represented in video games like that. It was a big step for me, as embarrassing as that is, to understand representation through that lens but it was helpful I guess, even though saying it now sounds stupid.

**Tuck:** No, I don’t think you need to feel stupid at all. I think that’s actually a really, really great example of oh like, it effects all of us when there seem to be all of these options for being a person but none of them are reflecting the way that I actually am. So what does it mean when there are a million options and none of them are me. What does that say about my place in this world? And so I think that’s actually a really good example of how you can be a straight, cis, white guy and still be like I’m still running into this edge of there is this one, perfect person that we’re all taught to role-play as and outside of that it’s gonna be difficult to see ourselves, I think that makes a lot of sense and I’m really glad that you brought it up.

So how do you approach that, do you, when you’re trying to make video game characters do you just do like this is close enough or are you like fuck it I’m go off the wall and make someone with green skin and seventeen eyes?

**Justin:** I really try to make characters who are as physically different from me as humanly possible at this point. Just because I feel like, again, stupid and shallow, I know what it’s like to go through the world as me in my body and representation issues aside, I think that it’s helpful for me to identify with as many different people, as many different ways of living in the world as possible.

Even though it’s a digital simulation, and is not real. Ebert said that movies are engines built to generate empathy and I think even more so are ways for video games where you’re playing as a character and actually controlling their actions in the world and seeing how those actions effect the world that can be a good exercise I think to play as people whose experiences are very different than your own.

**Tuck:** Yeah! I really wanted to ask you this question from one of my best friends who is the person who introduced me to McElroy family of content who said, “As King of Munch Squad, what is the most trans and most cis snack? There are right answers.” And it was written by an ostensibly cis person, so it’s not my fault.

**Justin:** Wow! There is no reality where I am going to announce the most trans snack.

**Tuck:** That’s fine.

**Justin:** And I hope everyone on the call can appreciate… you know part of my growth is being know how to hold’em know when to fold ‘em and that one is a non-starter. So I will not be announcing the most trans snack. The most cis snack feels like in the pork rind family for sure (laughter) right? It definitely feels like that’s the neighborhood you’re going to be in. Probably the most cis snack is probably Funyuns is what I would say, if I was picking snacks.

**Tuck:** Ok, so I wanted to give you the opportunity, you have two people on the call who are professional trans people, we literally teach people about gender as our job, do you have any questions for us about gender?

**Justin:** [nervously exhales]

**Tuck:** You can say no I’ve got it, Tuck I’ve got it.

**Justin:** I clearly don’t got it Tuck, clearly not! (laughter) Can I ask something, like you’re offering this right, free?

**Tuck:** I’m offering this and you can ask literally anything.

**Justin:** This is a thing that I, ok, this is gonna sound so stupid but you did offer, so I’m gonna take advantage of it. As a cis person who has been male their whole life, we’re taught that there’s that genders can mean whatever to different people, that manifests in, it can be anything. We teach our daughters that the fact that they are young women is not relevant to anything, in terms of what they can do, there’s no limits that can be placed on that, there’s no rules or guidelines or restrictions or anything that is tied to that, being women. They can take that to mean whatever. And I feel like a lot of people of our way of thinking would say the same thing, that you want them to have the same opportunities and have no sort of expectations ok. How do you sync that with identifying as a gender other than what you are assigned?

I struggle to understand that simultaneously, gender should not have any meaning tied to it, but then obviously it’s very meaningful right, because it’s very important for some people to identify as a gender other than their own, I want to understand but I feel like I never want to ask anybody because who cares what I think or what I wonder. It’s from a place of wanting to understand better. Does that make sense? Does that question make any sense?

**Cass:** This is the fight that trans people have with each other that

**Justin:** I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to start something

**Cass:** No, no, no. I’m saying that you’re right in a way that is fucked up and hard because we don’t know the answer to that one actually, because we don’t know what gender actually is. And if we we’re like gender is this thing that makes you feel bad about your body then we could be like oh cool, that means changing our bodies makes a lot of sense, because changing our bodies is what we’re changing when we’re changing gender. But then a lot of people are like no, my gender isn’t my body, it’s the way I feel at a party when I feel awkward, and I’m like wait, I just take anxiety medication for that, so that’s not gender. So everybody has very different understandings of what constitutes there gender and therefore saying, oh gender can be this expansive thing but also this specific thing.

I think about these as kind of like how in science we used to not know like anything about space, and now we know like 1% of the facts about space, I’m like we just don’t know anything about gender and trans people are starting to learn 1% of the facts about gender, and that’s why there are so many paradoxes that we can’t quite sort out. I don’t know if Tuck has a better answer to that, but I literally teach and am published in the academic theory of this and we’re all like, I don’t fucking know man. So you’re not asking a dumb question. You’re asking the hard question.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I think the thing that’s hard about gender is that it is literally fake. Like the definition is literally a sort of recursive, well gender is this social construct that we’ve created around being male or female or both or neither, and so it’s a very localized social project and if you’ve ever done a group project, group projects suck shit and everyone’s on a different page about what they want it to look like and some people are putting a lot of effort in and some people are putting like now effort in.

And so not only is there a group project you’re doing about gender but everyone else also has their groups and their group projects about gender and somehow we’re supposed to take this, a mess, and make it also into a system that we run our whole society off of, whether it’s legally or medically or whatever. And so it’s actually, we have no answer to it but we have to pretend that we do because it’s so embedded in our system and it’s a fun hell.

**Justin:** But if you think that’s hard, imagine how much harder it is for us cis people to understand! (laughter) Which brings me to my conclusion that life is indeed harder for cisgender people, and I didn’t think we’d get there but Wow… no (laughter) What an absolute… Kidding aside, that’s why, what I try to tell other cis people is, like parents sometimes have this thing like I stopped saying “colored”, so that should be good, I did that so I should be fine, I don’t think I could be racist cause I did do that other stuff.

And especially with issues of gender it moves pretty quick, so I’m just trying to pay as close attention and listen as best I can, cause it’s not like a thing where you can make these three changes and now you’re an ally for good. It’s more complicated than that for sure.

**Cass:** Yeah, it’s that group project but you literally never get a final grade and never graduate and it’s the worst (laughter).

**Tuck:** Well thank you for talking to the other cis people, I appreciate that service.

**Justin:** Yeah, I’ll keep them in line, don’t worry.

**Tuck:** Thank you so much. Well, the way we always end this show is by asking, in your ideal world what would the future of gender look like?

**Justin:** Uh, I think my official answer is going to be “you tell me.”

**Tuck:** Alright, you know that’s fair, you know your place and I appreciate you. (laughter)

**Cass:** That took a turn, a little domination turn here at the end.

(theme music plays)

Tuck: That’s gonna do it for part one of our 100th episode Cis Day of Visibility extravaganza! If you are new to the show please subscribe and check out our 90 something episodes featuring actual trans people. We’ve got a whole section of our website it’s at genderpodcast.com/starterpacks where you can browse past episodes of the show sorted by interest. Justin has a new graphic novel out with his family called The Crystal Kingdom.

It’s part 4 in the Adventure Zone series. Find all of Justin’s work at McElroy.family and wherever you get podcasts. We are on Twitter and Instagram @gendereveal and at genderpodcast.com. Our non-profit merch shop is at bit.ly/gendermerch. And you can sign up for our weekly behind-the-scenes newsletter and support our show at patreon.com/gender. This episode was produced by me, Cassius Adair and me, Tuck Woodstock and edited by me and Julia Llinas Goodman. Special thanks this week to Rich Posert for the snack question and for Jeffrey Nils Gardner for trying their best to salvage my audio. Our logo is by Ira M. Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder, additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions. We’ll be back later this week with more feelings about gender.

(theme music plays and stops)

**Tuck:** Thank you so much for coming on the show, you’re free to live the rest of your life and the rest of your day not interrogated by two transsexuals on a podcast about what gender is and how you should do it. So congrats, you made it through it, you survived!

**Justin:** Yeah, no problem, thanks for having me. I was kinda nervous for, I think for completely sane reasons.

**Tuck:** I think so.

**Justin**: A lot more fun than I thought.

**Tuck:** Oh good, we love to be surprisingly fun

**Justin:** We’ll see how the final edit comes out [robot voice] “I… don’t… get… it, boys… are… boys” (laughter)

**Tuck:** It’s like you a clip of you saying it’s harder for cisgender people” looped for a half-hour and that’s the whole thing

**Justin:** It’s like the ringtone that finally cancels me for good.

**Justin:** Oh my god

**Cass:** Oh my god