**Tuck:** The Bistitchual Yarn Shop offers a wide range of beautiful, queer and/or Canadian, indie, dyed yarn and handmade accessories. They offer beginner, and not-so-beginner, knitting and crochet zoom classes, so you can join from anywhere in the world. Visit them in person at 708 Annette Street in Toronto, or online at bistitchual.ca. They ship internationally and offer free shipping on orders over $100.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**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 ends]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone. I hope you’re all hanging in there. This week on the show, we are airing the second part of our two-part series, Catching up with Gender Reveal Alumni Power Couple: Mal Blum and Gaby Dunn. Last week, we heard Mal talk about Gaby’s gender journey, among.. other things, and this week we’re going straight to the source. Topics in our chat with Gaby include: working through internalized transphobia and biphobia, pushing for queer and trans representation in Hollywood, and *refusing* to make ourselves more palatable, even when it might hurt our careers..

**Gaby [voice clip]:** There are so many more queer things that are so much weirder and more beautiful than we’re allowed to talk about, I find, on the internet.

**Tuck:** Also just a quick note that Gaby and I make a few references to someone named Drew. That is Drew Gregory. She is a trans writer. She has an amazing essay on Autostraddle, one of my favorite essays ever, called “Giving Poppers to Cis Women.” Lots of other writing too, just a side note, check her out. She’s amazing. But before we get to that, really exciting news! You may have heard about our biannual grant program in the past. In April we solicited hundreds of applications from trans people of color, who are doing some kind of rad art or activism, and we handed those applications to a team of seven judges, who were also all trans people of color. We expected to award ten, $500 grants, but thanks to some extra funding...thank you extra funders!...We were able to choose seventeen grant recipients! Making it, by far, our biggest round of grants ever!

I’m not going to tell you about all our winners here, because there are seventeen of them, but I do want to share one little anecdote. I am always looking for ways to make the grant as accessible as possible, so when our friends at A.B.O. Comix reached out and asked if they could pass the application to their incarcerated comrades, I was frankly embarrassed that I hadn’t already thought about the fact that not everybody can just apply to grants on a Google form. So, thanks to A.B.O. Comix...which by the way, if you don’t know about A.B.O. Comix, you can learn so much in our Episode 80 with Casper.. Thanks to A.B.O. Comix, we received several handwritten grant applications from incarcerated trans folx, and three of them were grant winners! So then A.B.O. Comix helped us again, because I don’t know how to use JPay. What I’m saying is, everything can always be more accessible. We are always prone to leaving out the most marginalized folx, even when we are trying not to. A huge, huge thanks to A.B.O. Comix for helping us send $1,500 to incarcerated, trans artists and activists across the country.

You can see a full list of all of our grant recipients, with links to their work, at genderpodcast.com/grant. And if you would like to help fund future grants, you’re in luck because our grants are 100% listener-funded! Mostly by Patreon donations, and also by one-off donations via PayPal, Venmo, and however else you want to send us money. So if you join us for as little as $1 a month, or $11 a year, at patreon.com/gender, you will be supporting our grant program when it comes back in the fall, and every time after that. You’ll also be supporting us, because we make the show every week! And speaking of supporting great causes, we have new merch in the shop this month...I don’t know what it looks like yet. I’m recording this on Friday. You and I can find out together by going to bit.ly/gendermerch and taking a peek at our July designs, which I just have to believe will exist by the time you’re hearing this! By the way, if you want to submit a design for consideration for a future round of merch, you can do that by contacting us through the link on our website, which is genderpodcast.com. In the meantime, it is time for This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes and high-hats plays briefly]

**Tuck:** This week in gender, we have long-awaited passport news out of the White House. On the last day of pride month, the United States State Department announced that the rules around passport gender markers were changing. To illustrate this, I am going to share a personal anecdote, which I did not script, so I don’t know what words are going to come out of my mouth. Let’s find out together. [shimmering transition noise leading into an upbeat xylophone tune]

Before last Wednesday, the only gender marker options on a U.S. passport were male, or female. So when I wanted to update my passport, I had to choose between one of two genders and if I was like, “Hey, I don’t actually want a female gender marker,” obviously my only other option was male, and to do that, I needed a note from a...M.D. specifically...not any doctor, an M.D., saying that I was ‘fully transexualed.’ If it said that you were ‘in transition,’ you could only get a two-year passport. So you had to get the doctor to say that you were ‘fully transed,’ so that you could get a ten-year passport, which is the typical passport. So my doctors weren’t M.D.’s. I had to find a random M.D., and say, “Hey, I know we don’t have a working relationship, but can we develop enough of a working relationship that you will, under threat of perjury, write a letter to the U.S. government that says I have fully transexualized?” And this person was like, “I will totally do that, but what are the qualifications for being fully trans?” And I said, “There aren’t any. You just.. [laughs] you just have to say that I am. You just have to do it, even though there are no rules...so you can look at ways that I have medically transitioned, but also if I didn’t medically transition, I could still be fully trans, because being trans isn’t a medical thing.”

And so I just had to explain to a cis person who doesn’t work with trans people, “no, this absolutely doesn’t make any sense but I need you to do it anyway.” And she did, bless her heart. I wrote her a thank you note, with rainbows on it. And I paid her $100, which is honestly very very cheap to get me this letter that said, “Tuck = boy.” [more xylophone] So I had chosen one of my genders out of the two genders, and I paid my $100 and I had gotten my letter, but I hadn’t gone all the way to actually turn in my passport (because that sounded hard, to go to a place,) and between the time that I got this letter and the time I actually went to the passport office, the U.S. government changed the rules, and now you can *self-declare* your gender. So no longer does a M.D. need to look at you and say that you have ‘fully transed’ your gender based on some sort of arbitrary metric that they made up in their head. We can just say, “I have transed.” Amazing. Also! They’re allowing an X marker…[shimmering transition noise] someday. If you go to the passport website right now, travel.state.gov, you will see this message:

 “We are taking further steps towards ensuring the fair treatment of LGBTQI+ citizens,” (sorry, asexuals, you’re out of luck) “regardless of their gender or sex. We are beginning the process of updating procedures for the issuance of U.S. passports and,” blah blah blah, “with the goal of offering a gender marker for non-binary, intersex and gender non-conforming persons. The process of adding a gender marker for non-binary, intersex and gender non-conforming persons to these documents is complex and will take time for extensive updates to our informational technologies (IT) systems.” Thank you for explaining IT to me! Anyways, it goes on:

“ we cannot provide an exact timeline for when we will begin offering a gender marker for non-binary, intersex and gender non-conforming persons. However, we will provide updates on this website. In the meantime, applicants cannot apply for a passport with a non-binary, intersex and gender non-conforming gender marker.”

Basically, I can be a boy now, or I can be non-binary later. This new announcement has revealed the real two genders; people who want all of their ID’s to match neatly, three x’s in a row like tic-tac-toe or...porn, and people who are trying to win the trans triple-crown, which in a similar spirit to the trans EGOT, is when you collect legal documents with three different gender markers. Anyway, the real two genders here, obviously, are the people who are like, “Yes! See me, validate me baby! X on my passport. Absolutely. Give it to me.” Which I get. And people who are like, “Actually, I don't want to be on a government list of X-gender-marker people, and I don’t see how that will keep me safe.” Which I also get.. And as always I am feeling half, “well this is better than when the government was trying to actively exterminate us, so I guess I’ll take it,” and half, “okay, but visibility without safety is arguably unhelpful and people are still dying and also the ocean is on fire???”

So…. I truly don’t know what gender I’m gonna have on my passport. You chime in, in the comments, (we don’t have those, but you know, twitter and instagram,) tell me what you’re gonna do. Also, as an aside, there are still, as far as I know, only two gender marker options on social security? When I was updating my social security, I did the thing where I just physically wrote in a third box that said non-binary, so technically I don’t know what my legal social security gender is...so that’s fun. This has been, This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes and high-hats plays briefly]

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades in]

**Tuck:** Gaby Dunn is a writer and best-selling author living in Los Angeles. They host the “Bad With Money” podcast, and in 2019 published a book of the same name. They also co-host the “Just Between Us'' podcast, and are the author of the BOOM Studios’ graphic novel, Bury the Lede. By the way, I’ve read it, it’s great.

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades out]

**Tuck:** Gosh..this is such a loaded question for you. The way that we always start the show is by asking, in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Gaby:** Ooooohhh...wow...when did I do my first interview with you?

**Tuck:** Three years ago

**Gaby:** Oh wow, okay… Well, I’m on a path… I mean, I kind of mentioned on my podcast, “Just Between Us,” that I was *thinking* about gender, and then a couple news outlets posted stories that were like, ‘youtuber Gaby Dunn comes out as maybe non-binary,’ which...is not a coming out [laughs.] And in the article, it would be like, ‘she did not want to make any definitive claims.’ So that kind of took away my ability to control that...or I don’t know. I mean….probably non-binary is the thing that is happening right now. And then I had she/they and then I switched it to they/she probably a few days ago, a week ago..and I’m sort of trying to grapple with what I look like, versus what people will...take away from what I look like… Does that make sense?

**Tuck:** It does make sense, and it is hard, because those things are unfortunately linked together and you can’t separate them. And yet, we still try to?

**Gaby:** Yeah, and it’s funny because when I was like “I’m cis,” I had a shaved head at times, I had very short hair, and I don’t remember feeling *any* way about it. I don’t remember feeling qualms about it. I don’t remember feeling like people were gonna see me as masculine, and just I... I had no thoughts on it. And I was dating cis men at the time, and just had no….whatever. So it didn’t feel loaded or anything, and now my hair is very long and all of a sudden the idea of what my hair should look like is a nagging thought all the time. Which.. I’ve had every color, every hair style. I never cared. I never thought about it. I was just like ‘I want to look different all the time.’ Which I still do. I changed my hair a week ago. I just want to look different every time someone sees me. But now my hair is so long that I’m like, ‘do I have to cut it off for people to take it seriously??’ Which sucks because then I see transmasc friends of mine who have long hair, and cis men that are surfers, like how come they get to have long hair?? Anyway… I’m doing great. How are you? [laughs]

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah, I think it’s… tricky, in general, but it sounds so much trickier for someone in your position. I mean first of all, it’s just intrusive and upsetting, at least it would be upsetting to me, to have to go through something like a gender journey, that is deeply personal and unstable, and then have outlets that are trying to report on it. That is upsetting and I’m sorry that that is a thing that happened because it sucks.

**Gaby:** Thanks

**Tuck:** But I think even on top of that, the pandemic… While obviously, objectively very bad, has been a time in which a lot of people could think more about their gender because they’re not being perceived as much, so you get to reflect on what you’re doing for yourself and maybe that’s something that you’re experiencing. But I feel like you also, as a sort of public-facing person, are still in front of people. You’re still on TikTok or on Instagram or whatever, so you’re still having to perform gender, in ways that other people might not have had to do in the last year and half. So that does seem like it would be difficult for someone that is so often perceived and so publicly perceived, to try and figure out what you want that perception to be.

**Gaby:** And perceived incorrectly all the time. That is frustrating. Especially because I think my fan base are cis, bisexual women, maybe largely white women, and I think they viewed me as ‘one of them.’ Then slowly over time, I have just been like “that’s not me...” And I feel stunted by what I’m viewed as, and stunted by… you know people that, let’s say the last heard from me was 2016, when I was still doing a lot of YouTube stuff, and then they find me again in 2021 and they are expecting the same person. For internet people, you existed yesterday, you existed ten years ago, and it’s all the same. And you know, I’m not perfect, so there’s resentment from certain people who I think benefited from using queerness as a business strategy, which is not something I’ve ever done, and that sort of came out in this very angry way.

And it came up with a lot of people being like, ‘yeah, it’s that bi woman from BuzzFeed,’ and I was like, ‘I hate this.’ [laughs] It was all at once, feeling like hundreds of people were perceiving you incorrectly, which felt awful. And then, you know I do brand deals and stuff, and brand deals will be either women-centric or you know… so I had a couple of those that I had already signed up to do and then you post them. But after one that I posted, for a week I was like ‘I hate this. I hate this. I’m upset. I’m upset. Why am I upset? I don’t like…’ you know? ‘I could’ve done this better. I could’ve shown myself more. This isn’t even me. Now people are gonna think this is me.’ And maybe I’m just a baby or new or something, but I don’t know how to express what’s happened. I don’t know how to be like “I’m different, and this has changed,” without alienating people who are like “you were queer just like me. You made me feel like I was queer enough, and now you’re something else.”

**Tuck:** I feel like.. what I’m hearing is a little bit of making some things mutually exclusive that maybe don't need to be mutually exclusive? If you are a non-binary person… does that change the way you think about your sexual orientation? Do you still describe yourself as a queer or bisexual person?

**Gaby:** yes, but then sometimes… my company, my production company and what I do all my business through is called Noted Bisexual Inc., which I made years ago, mostly as a fun way to make business men say have to ‘noted bisexual.’ So I named it that, and then somedays I’m like, ‘I’m not even bisexual.’ [laughs] And then other days I’ll be like, ‘no, you are bisexual. You’re being..’ whatever. But then I get nervous. Bisexual brings up all these ideas of, you know, some girl on Tindr who’s trying to get other women to sleep with her uggo boyfriend or whatever, and...that’s internalized biphobia to myself…

**Tuck:** [laughing] I was gonna say… you’re just hate criming your people.

**Gaby:** I know! I’m the person that’s gonna fuck the uggo boyfriend!

[both laughing]

**Gaby:** That’s me! So I do identify as bisexual. Then sometimes it’s, ‘no, I’m queer.’ Then I get upset about the way that younger people sort of police words. So it’s hard for me, as a more public person, to see friends of mine, who are not as public queers, freely being like, “I’m a dyke,” “I’m a faggot,” you know? And then like, the idea that I have had pushback for saying those words, and I think it's because.. people are like, ‘you’re bi, you can’t use those words,’ or whatever. Which is such a misinterpretation of the history of queerness, I think. And it makes me resentful because, like, ‘you don’t…. You’re not seeing me.’

I feel sometimes, queer-er than my audience, and so that puts a limit on how queer I am perceived as. I think they want me to be palatable in a way that I don't feel I am. It's unfortunate sometimes because I’m allowed to be so much funnier in private, with my queer friends, than I’m allowed to be publicly.. and that sucks. There are so many more queer things that are so much weirder and more beautiful than we’re allowed to talk about, I find, on the internet. And it’s so unfortunate because I think queer art… it shouldn’t be like that. But it’s just… I think also, you know, we had a woman on the podcast who.. we were talking about queer history, and she was sort of like, ‘when new activists.. When new queers are coming up and they’re young, they want to go so hard.’ And I get that.

And then you get a little bit older and you’re like, ‘oh okay, so it’s a little bit more nuanced.’ But in the beginning you’re like, ‘there is no nuance!’ Which I am guilty of as well… yeah, I don’t know. Part of me is like, ‘it would’ve been so easy for me to continue presenting a this kind of palateable, bisexual, white woman,’ to make money, and you know, the brand there is so easy. And I could’ve just kept doing that and probably have been more successful.. But then i just had to, every few years, just fuck it all up and do something different, and people… don’t like it [laughs]

**Tuck:** I mean, yeah, I am the last person to comment on this because I have a very similar thing to you, right? Where I refuse to be palatable, and I was talking to my friend yesterday about how I’m like, ‘I will take gigs with groups that I don’t particularly care for if I am allowed to be rude and surly about it during the gig. But if I have to perform any kind of palatability as part of the gig, I will simply not do it?

**Gaby:** But it’s hard! But it’s hard because then I lose fans! I loose followers because they think I’m some kind of controversial edge lord [chuckles] when I’m just being a queer person.

**Tuck:** Right! But I think… I guess what I think I’m saying is when I talked to Kirby on this show a few weeks ago, they were talking about, in this case, getting misgendered, and they were saying, ‘you know, when you first come out, you’re gonna be friends with a bunch of people who misgender you, and then you’re, slowly over time, going to phase out the people that misgender you and add new friends who don’t misgender you.’ And I think that’s just true for also fans of people who see you.

Right now I can tell you, there are a lot of fans of Gender Reveal who are trans, who are really big fans of yours, who were really excited that you were gonna be back on show, who were really really excited when you came out..or didn’t come out but were sort of coerced out by this publication, but that were excited to see this hints. And so, yes you might lose some people who were very boring, and want to police who you are. But there are all these new people who are very very excited to witness you and those people are better and more fun to have around, and so..

**Gaby:** [sniffles] Sorry, I’m crying. I’m crying.

**Tuck:** No, sorry to make you cry on the podcast..

**Gaby:** No no no…it’s okay!

**Tuck:** Remember the first time we talked and it was so fun, and now I’m just making you cry?

**Gaby:** Noo, no, no, no. No.

[Both laughing]

**Gaby:** No, I’m crying because it is..it sucks, because people did jump ship for sure, and I lost work, truthfully, which I haven’t really talked about. But yeah, there’s work that I've lost, people that didn’t want to work with anymore, because they had bought one thing and now I wasn’t that thing. And so you know, that was...you get resentful. You get resentful of the people who are palatable because you’re just like, ‘why couldn’t I have just shut up and been that? Why? You could’ve just been quiet, and presented this one way in public, and made your money.’ But then I’m like, ‘why am I like this? Why couldn’t I just have been… you know, why am I this way?’

**Tuck:** Because it’s better! Because it’s better to be an actual person who you are! You dont need to be Gaby: The Noted Bisexual and Cisgender Woman from BuzzFeed for your whole life. That’s boring. I know that some people are their same person their whole life, and I frankly, can’t relate. I have a different first, middle and last name. I have a different gender. I have a different sexual orientation. Somehow I have a different race; don’t ask about that one. And so, I just… all the things are different. My body chemistry is different. Everything is different, and I think that’s really fun and good, and it just means that you end up in different communities over time. And when your community is so big, and you get so much feedback about who you are, that’s gonna suck way more.. I’m not trying to diminish how much that sucks.

**Gaby:** No and so I’ve outgrown so many things and when you outgrow stuff, it’s uncomfortable. I had one comment, (because of course, whatever) but I had one comment where I posted, ‘oh, I’m using she/they now,’ and someone was like, ‘oh great, they got to you too.’ And I think about that comment all the time because I’m like, ‘who’s they?’ [chuckles] Who? Who came to me in the night, and touched my head and said, ‘you are non-binary now?’ Who did it?

**Tuck:** Yeah, so I think that..people are gonna be awful...and unfornately, even if you are the *most* palatable version of yourself, that then at you would look at yourself and are like, ‘who the fuck is that? I don’t like that person.’ People are still gonna be insufferable to you because people on the internet *are insufferable*, you know? And so if people are just gonna be awful, what can we do to create spaces in which we feel restored rather than just, you know, settling for whatever gets us the least yelled at. And it’s really really really hard, but I just want to believe that it is possible.

**Gaby:** The thing is, and it sucks to say, but the communities that I want to be a part of are less successful, right? Smaller shows, they make less money. I feel like by being open about not being cis, I’m throwing money out the window.

**Tuck:** But I think at the end of the day, you don’t get to decide, ‘am I trans?’ You get to decide, ‘am I gonna be a person, that I am in the world? Or am I just gonna shove that down as long as possible?’ And shoving it down as long as possible, historically, has not felt good to people. Can’t speak for you… but historically, it has not gone great, even when it feels like it’s what is safe and important at the time. So you will figure it out. Speaking of which, we gotta talk about that first interview.

**Gaby:** Woof!!

**Tuck:** I look back, and it is iconic. Episode 27, where I ask, ‘what’s your gender?’ And you’re like, ‘I’m a woman.’ And then I was like, ‘so how do you know you’re a woman?’ And then you just spend ten minutes explaining that you don’t feel like a woman…

**Gaby:** [groans] wow…

[shimmering transition noise]

**Gaby [voice clip]:** Sometimes it’s jarring to me, when a waiter is like, ‘hello ladies,’ and I’m like, ‘who do you mean?’ [laughs] Or someone is like, ‘the girls,’ and then I’m also included in ‘the girls,’ and I’m like, ‘that’s weird.’ But then I know...but I am one.

**Tuck:** And then I’m like, ‘so to clarify, a lot of what you described, resonates with me, someone who doesn’t identify as a woman. Do you ever question it?’ And you’re like, ‘well sometimes…’

**Gaby [voice clip]:** I did have a period of time when I was like, ‘maybe I’m non-binary, I should think about that.’ And so I read some books and thought about it. And I was dating a guy at the time, and he would get - jokingly for a couple months, I would refer to myself as ‘ya boi’ - and he did not like that I would call myself ‘ya boi.’

[shimmering transition noise]

**Gaby:** Wow… yeah, man. And then my partner at the time, who we talk about a lot in the episode, is also a transmasculine person now with a totally different name. So… you know, what a ride. I had a boyfriend in 2016 who, when he was dumping me, he was like, ‘I think that you are genderqueer or something and I am holding you back.’ And I’ve said to Mal, ‘he didn’t want me to be non-binary,’ and Mal was like, ‘no, he didn’t say he didn’t *want* you to be. He said he was breaking up with you because..’ And I was… to me that was a rejection based on… and I was like, ‘I didn’t want him to break up with me. So that can’t be a thing that I’ll be.’ Because the first time that came up was in a rejection, and it was also like, ‘oh, well if I am that, then people will break up with me.’ You know, because that was the evidence I had.

And so I was like, ‘that person is crazy for thinking that. Can you even *imagine*? That person is dumping me because they,’ well for many reasons, but one reason is that ‘they think they’re holding me back from my true gender??’ This was 2016...and I was like ‘that person’s nuts!’ And it was because I didn’t...I wanted to make it that they broke up with me for no reason, so I was like, ‘that’s not even real! They’re breaking up with me for fake reasons!’ or whatever. Which, that wasn’t true. And then I was also was just like, ‘if you look cis, then are you are cis,’ [laughs] I was internalized...whatever, where I met an AFAB person, who looked feminine, who identified as non-binary and I remember being like, ‘okay, well if being trans is about not feeling close to your assigned gender, and everything about you looks like your assigned gender, then I don’t get it.’ Saying that *to people*…out loud!

**Tuck:** [chuckles] Yeah, but I mean, Carta was on the show a couple weeks ago, and she talked about having a similar reaction to trans people right? When she was not out to herself as trans. Where she was like, ‘yeah, everyone has those feelings, and you don’t see me making a big deal about it, and being trans about it,’ right?

**Gaby:** Which is essentially my entire first Gender Reveal interview with you is me going, ‘yeah of course, but..’ you know what I mean?

**Tuck:** Yeah, and I think that is unfortunately just a normal part of this whole thing, is a lot of people dealing with feelings by being like, ‘I couldn’t possibly be trans, and I feel that way. So what are they doing?’ I mean I had, for whatever reason, sort of the opposite reaction. Where I saw - when I was first coming out to myself - I saw people and I was jealous and I was like, ‘why do those people *get* to be non-binary, and I don’t *get* to be non-binary?’ And then I was like, ‘oh, I do.’ So you know, yeah, it’s a thing that we work through and a lot of people go through it. And luckily one of the cool things about this show is that it gives people space to quietly reflect on that in their brain and be like, ‘oh I guess I do get to be non-binary and look this way or be this way,’ or whatever. Because I’ve been interviewing cis people, and I’ve noticed that a lot of cis people, really conflate gender - which is a felt, sense of thing - with presentation. And those things are really different.

**Gaby:** Correct. And even pronouns. I’m figuring out that pronouns are so divorced from that. I know super femme, AFAB people who are like, ‘I wanna use “he,”’ and me two years ago, would’ve been like, ‘fuck off.’ Even though it had nothing to do with me, but in my heart, it did. [laughs] But now I’m like, ‘absolutely.’ I feel so happy in these spaces where you can do that and it’s you know...not even bat an eyelash. But then you go out into the “real world,” and I just feel sad for everyone in the real world. [laughs] Where everyone just seems really miserable.

Then I get this sense of superiority where I’m like, ‘but I’m behind the matrix. I know secrets,’ you know? ‘My life is better.’ But then it’s hard to convey that without, 1. Seeming like an asshole and 2. In a way that people understand, you know? I wanna be able to make stuff in Hollywood about queerness that’s at this next level. I want a character on a show who looks like me and uses ‘he.’ But I’m like, ‘how do you even start with that?’ But maybe you just do? I don't know.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I think it’s… incremental, unfortunately. And I’m not a person who’s patient enough for that. Which is why I just make this in my closet by myself.

**Gaby:** I’m not patient either! That’s why I’m here and then that’s why I have to get off Twitter, because my hot takes are too spicy. This is what would happen, right: I would say something on Twitter. Everyone would dogpile me and be like, ‘you’re canceled.’ Two weeks later, someone else would have the same take and everyone would be like, ‘ah yes, that is a good take.’ And I feel that way in Hollywood too, where I take the brunt or whatever and then people are like, ‘that’s insane. You can’t do that.’ but then two years later there’s a character exactly like that one that I was told was not doable. And that person is on fucking network television. [laughs] Which I’m glad! But then I just sound resentful. So what are you gonna do?

**Tuck:** Yeah, but then you’re also seeing the inside of it though, you know? For all of the non-binary characters that exist now in film and TV, you and I have friends who are non-binary actors, who are not getting parts. And then we can see from behind the scenes, who they’re casting, and who they’re not casting, and when they’re claiming to be ‘open’ to transmasc actors, or non-binary actors, or transfemme actors, and when they’re just like, ‘nevermind, we’re gonna go with this actual stereotype of a person.’ And so, it can be really frustrating.

**Gaby:** If you’re an AFAB, non-binary person, and you’re on television, you should have a buzzed head, you know what I mean? And then I sort of had this whole reckoning where I was like, ‘you’re saying gender neutral, but what you mean is masculine.’ And then, you know, I have friends of mine who go on testosterone and as soon as they start having facial hair, they feel more comfortable to grow their hair out. So I’m like, ‘do I need a moustache?’ Let me tell you, I’m Jewish, I already have one. But then I’ll have it grown out, and I’ll get comments being like, ‘oh she has a moustache.’

**Tuck:** I mean I… think that people just not make comments on anyone’s’ bodies because, lately people have started commenting on hair that I have *always* had on my body, because they’re like, ‘oh, well you must have grown this anew for your transmasculine body.’ And I’m like, ‘no bitch, this has always been here. And you always saw it. And you just thought it was bad and shameful. And now that you’ve decided that it is actually not bad and shameful, on me in *this* gender, you’ve decided you can comment on it.’ It feels very bad.

**Gaby:** [laughs] Yeah! I feel like they’re telling me, ‘oh, because you must not know, as a girl. You must not know that you have a moustache, so we’ll point it out.’ And I’m like, ‘I grew this!’

**Tuck:** I’m like, ‘bitch, I got bullied for that in middle school. I have the receipts.. in my brain folds,’ you know? I’m aware. I was told. I don’t need to be told again. So, yeah. It’s rough.

**Gaby:** [sighs] Yeah. What else was funny in my interview?

**Tuck:** Gosh. What was funny? There was a lot of joy in there. I’m sorry that you’ve now become a sad, jaded by capitalism, trans person.

[both laugh]

**Gaby:** No! I have good projects going. I sold a TV show, and I have a movie that I’m working on that has a trans character and all this stuff. But, you know I felt a lot of guilt, because I felt like I needed to make stuff that was like ‘strong female leads,’ but then this screenplay that I wrote and am working on, the main character’s a guy and he was just so easy for me to write. I feel like I’ve always had a better grasp on male characters, but then I feel bad because you’re supposed to, as a woman, write women, so that there can be more strong women or whatever, and I’m more interested in writing complicated men. So I don’t know. But the TV show is a queer woman lead character, and then the movie is dual leads of a trans woman and a cis guy. So, you know, I’m complaining but I get to do things. [laughs] I don’t want you to think I’m just a crying, sad sack now, you know?

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Gaby:** The interview is so ... ridiculous, because I do not explain [laughing] being a woman at all. I have nothing to say about it. I mostly am, bringing up instances where I’m *not* a woman. It’s really wild.

**Tuck:** One of my favorite parts, is not about your gender, but it’s just near the end when you’re like, ‘sometimes a person will say…’

[shimmering transition noise]

**Gaby [voice clip]:** ‘I would prefer to be called they/them.’ And it’s like, ‘okay.’ Fucking, Lady Gaga asked us to call her ‘Lady Gaga’ and we all do it. Everyone’s like, ‘this guy’s name is Ice-T,’ and everyone is fine with that! And then a trans person is like, ‘call me Jenna,’ and everyone’s like, ‘no.’ What!??

[shimmering transition noise]

**Gaby:** Mal laughed so hard at that. I also.. I had a thing happen right around that time where I said to a friend of mine, ‘I would be okay using they/them pronouns.’ And that person said, ‘ugh, please don’t do that. It’s so inconvenient.’

**Tuck:** Oh my god.

**Gaby:** And I was like, ‘okay..’ And then I was just like, ‘I’m inconveniencing everyone.’ That’s my thing right now, with she. If someone sees me at the coffee shop and is like, ‘this is her coffee,’ and they’re looking at me, I’m not gonna be a person who’s like, ‘how dare you??’

**Tuck:** Right. And that’s not required for being trans. I don’t correct people when people misgender me in public, most of the time. And it’s really easy to not misgender me. There’s really only one wrong answer, and yet, it still happens, right? You know, using a pronoun doesn’t mean you have a fist fight in the street every time someone uses the wrong pronoun. It just means that, when someone is taking the time to know how you refer to yourself and how you would like others to refer to you, that’s what they use. And you know, that’s a different energy, and people have different levels of comfortability. At the very most, I think if I’m with a group of other people and none of us are women, and someone is like, ‘ladies..’ one of us will sometimes be like, ‘oh, not ladies,’ and then keep going.

**Gaby:** And I don’t..I wouldn’t do it for myself. But all the time I do it for Mal, and that’s easier.

**Tuck:** Right. Because that’s easier. So I think that’s more common, is doing it for other people.

**Gaby:** I’ve internalied, ‘trans people being inconvenient.’

**Tuck:** Okay, but you’re dating one! [laughs]

**Gaby:** I know, and let me tell ya...the ball and chain! [laughing]

**Tuck:** Okay, no, but let’s talk about that. Because I wanna talk about that it was our first Gender Reveal couple, both on the same season. So that was perfect and amazing, and everyone was really excited when it happened. Gender Reveal Couple ™ ™ : Gaby and Mal. I asked Mal, ‘did you trans Gaby?’ and they laughed a lot, and were like, ‘no, I did not trans Gaby.’ But, do you feel like being in a relationship with a transmasc person, who used they/them pronouns, whether or not it was inconvenient, had any sort of effect on your comfort with exploring this?

**Gaby:** They’re one of the first people I ever met who used they/them...ever in life, and I didn’t even really know that that was a thing. And then I met them, and I knew that was a thing. I was also kind of this funny thing because I was queer, but I didn’t really know that much about trans people. And I saw Mal at a video shoot, I was in a music video for them, and I saw them, and I had a...reaction. I thought they were the cutest...the hottest person and I was like, [gasps]...

**Tuck:** I know. They’re very hot.

**Gaby:** I know and I was like [gasps]. And Mal is like, ‘well that wasn’t me. That was my gender.’ And I was like, ‘noo.’ It was- I mean maybe you can’t divorce them from each other. I was just like, ‘oh… my god...’ and then I was… I tried to get with them and they were like, ‘no, thank you.’ Which is fair. I probably would’ve been a nightmare at that time. Then, you know, I think you subconsciously self-select. So I pursued Mal really hard. I won. As Mal likes to say, ‘what a prize.’

[both laugh]

**Gaby:** I saw Drew at a movie, we were with a group of friends, and I asked her to hang out and was like, ‘do you want to be friends?’ And now we’re best of friends (and we have best friend necklaces, no big deal.) But I think you self-select right? So you...why was I interested in getting to know all of these people? At a certain point you’re sort of like, ‘are you cis?? Because everyone you hang out with is trans. Everyone.’ Which is kind of what happened to my sister. My sister was straight, and every single person she knew was queer. She did not know one straight person. And that was because she moves to LA and befriended all of my friends, and it was just easier for her to hang out with us. But then four years in she’s crying in a pool in Palm Springs being like, ‘I’m pansexual,’ so. I feel like, if all of you’re - I don’t want to speak for people - but if *all* your friends start being one thing it’s not that *‘they* turned you trans.’ It’s that *you went* to those people.

So at a certain point, I look around, and my partner’s trans, my best friend is trans, and the people that I hang out with all the time are trans, and like, ‘why did I choose that? And why was I drawn to these people?’ It’s the same reason that, I was friends with all these people in college and I was the only ‘out’ person, but everyone was straight. And now we’re in our 30’s and everyone is bisexual. It’s not that ‘they turned you’ anything, or that it’s some sort of queer agenda. That’s who you want to be around. Sometimes Mal will be like, ‘you just liked me in the beginning because of my gender.’

But there were other transmasc people at that camp, and I didn’t - A-Camp where, the second time we met - and I didn’t have the same reaction to them. Although, Drew was, a while ago, making fun of me. My sister did… last year, because nobody could get together for my birthday… my sister had all of my friends make a roast video for me, and - which was very sweet - and one of Drew’s roasts was, ‘I’m very happy for the safe space that Gaby has created, in her DM’s, for transmasculine people.’

[both laugh]

**Gaby:** And I was like, ‘Nooo!’ and she was like, ‘she’s just really given them a safe space to go..’ and I was like, ‘fuck yoouu.’ [laughs] (That’s an exaggeration.) But yeah, Mal has been super helpful, even just practically. I put on a binder, and then it was too small and I couldn’t get it off. And then I was flailing around in the bedroom trying to get it off, and I needed a second pair of hands. And then Mal was just like, ‘okay, this doesn’t fit you..’ And just that, is helpful. And you know, normalizing. Now it’s sort of funny to think that there are people that don’t rub testosterone on themselves before bed. You know what I mean? So that is helpful, right? Because if I was just around or just had my friends from high school, I don’t know what I would think that I was. And they’re all lovely.. They’re all married and have like three kids. I have a Chihuahua. Everyone’s doing the same.

**Tuck:** [laughs] I feel that though. I think that’s the confusion, right? Around concepts like ‘social contagion.’ I keep coming back to this line, this season, and I’m sorry to keep saying it, but gender is *completely* a construct by definition. It is just a big group project and so, if you’re in a group where everyone has decided that there are two genders and they’re fixed to the sex assigned at birth, then yeah, you’re gonna be a woman, in that context. And if you’re then in a group where that group project has decided that, ‘actually, gender can look like this and that and this,’ then you’re gonna have a different answer. And it doesn’t mean that you were even different people in both spaces - although maybe you were - it just means that there were different options available to you.

So obviously, when you go to the group with more options, you going to perhaps choose a different option. And that makes so much sense, and it isn’t about changing anyone. And I think that can also be true when you’re tying it back to who you are as a person and how people are perceiving you… People are perceiving you from within the definitions that they have, and they don’t necessarily have access to the working definitions of way that you’re used to seeing the world, in your community, with your actual real friends, that you have built. And that makes it really really hard to communicate because you’re communicating cross-culturally.

**Gaby:** Right, exactly..

**Tuck:** And that’s just not always gonna work… And I’m just excited for you because you do have a bunch of creative projects, you’re surrounded by very cool people. I mean, even in the middle of pandemic, you put together these very cool, all queer and trans table reads of like Oceans Eleven and Brokeback Mountain. And those were amazing. I remember watching that with my roommate, for her birthday and being like, ‘there is nothing I want more in the world than watching Jen Richards play.. The Brad Pitt character in Ocean’s Eleven.’ It’s the best thing I’ve ever seen. And that’s a thing that you helped make happen!

**Gaby:**  Everyone crushed that!

**Tuck:** They did amazing! Everyone did amazing.

**Gaby:** That’s so flattering..thank you for saying that, and thank you for… I don’t often hear people say that they care… oh no, I’m crying [laughs and sniffles] That they care what I think in a way that isn’t like, ‘tell us that bi women are - white bi women are the most oppressed.’ You know that I mean? I think the idea that anyone would see me as somebody is saying anything is, hard because I’ve changed what I’m saying. I don’t know.

**Tuck:** I mean, I… this podcast is a four-year documentation of me changing what I’m saying…

**Gaby:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Tuck:** And the world around us is changing all the time, and we’re learning things all the time. And someone asked me the other day what I had learned from making Gender Reveal, and I was like, ‘no literally, this is how I’ve learned about gender. Is by making a podcast about gender for four years.’ And so, on that note, the way we always end the show is by asking: in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Gaby:** I guess that... it would be less divided, or it wouldn’t need to be decided so much. But I also understand that there are binary trans people, that that is really important for them. But I am enjoying the shift from gender, to gender expression, to pronouns all sort of being three separate things. So I hope that continues and people just respect and are like, ‘oh okay, sure,’ you know, that that’s not an assumption. And I like that that’s kind of where it’s heading. But also I think that’s confused my mother so...

**Tuck:** [laughs] Gaby’s mother can figure it out.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. If this episode resonated with you, or maybe you learned something, please consider sharing the episode with folx in your community. You can find Gaby @gabyroad on Instagram, @dabygunn on TikTok and on the “Bad with Money,” and “Just Between Us,” podcasts. We are on Instagram and Twitter @gendereveal, and at genderpodcast.com where you can find episode transcripts, a list of grant winners, and many more resources. Support our grant program, and the work we do here to make the show, at patreon.com/gender. And support fantastic, talented trans artists, and trans organizations by grabbing something from our new merch collection, at bit.ly/gendermerch. This episode was produced by me, Tuck Woodstock, and masterfully edited by Julia Llinas Goodman. Our logo is by Ira M. Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music by Blue Dot Sessions. Special thanks this week to AC Dumlao, and Z Griffler for patiently waiting and reading several books while I made this episode. We’ll be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Gaby:** How many people cry on the show?

**Tuck:** I would say you’re not the first one.. Does that help?

**Gaby:** [laughs] Yeah, I bet.

**Tuck:** You did cry the most of anyone. But normally I’m not talking to my friend on a video call, I’m talking to a stranger on the phone.

[brief pause between clips]

**Gaby:** I don’t read reviews of the show or anything. Mostly because the reviews are like, ‘your voice is annoying,’ and I’m like, ‘thanks..’ But it was funny, I was hanging out with Jen Richards one time and I said, ‘they thought I was annoying,’ or whatever. And then Jen was like, ‘that’s kind of your thing. Right?’

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Gaby:** And I was like, ‘honestly more annoying representation on television! I don’t care about queer representation. Where is my annoying representation?’ [laughing]