[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 still hanging in there. This episode drops the morning before inauguration day so I don't know what the world will look like when you hear this but I hope that you are staying safe and healthy, wherever you are. This week on the show I'm really excited to introduce you to one of my dearest friends and favorite people Salimatu Amabebe. Salimatu is a multimedia artist whose work has been featured in Vogue, Eater and the New York Times. In this episode, we talk about loving your body, respecting yourself enough to stop dating straight people.

**Salimatu**: So much of dating is knowing the thing that feels right, and then doing the thing that doesn't feel quite right anyway.

**Tuck**: --- And how blackness can affect the way that you and other people perceive your gender.

**Salimatu**: I think that I wasn't able to participate in any part of womanhood, actually.

**Tuck**: But before we get to that we have a quick Theymail message this week. Theymail is a program where people pay a little bit of money for me to read a teeny tiny ad on the show. This week's message is from Tay, who says I lost my job as a goldsmith back in March and haven't gotten any unemployment for months, so please check out my teeny tiny biz Heebie Jeebies jewelry for all of your kitschy queerido jewelry needs. That's Heebie Jeebies jewelry on Instagram. Now it's time for this week in gender, and a content warning this one is truly a huge bummer, but we had to talk about it sometime. So, here we go.

[Chime music]

**Tuck**: This week and gender, we're finally talking about Bell v Tavistock. If you missed it, this is a case from the UK High Court. It was decided back in December, 2020. Technically, there are two claimants in this case, but I'm going to completely ignore one of them, who is a cisgender mother of a trans autistic teen. I cannot handle her. We will not be talking about her, but the other claimant is a woman named Keira Bell, who first started questioning her gender when she was 14. She went on puberty blockers at 16, testosterone at 17, and had top surgery when she was 20. Now she is 23, and she has detransitioned, and she is so unhappy about this entire experience that she has essentially sued to block all children in the United Kingdom from accessing medical gender transitions.

[Chime music fades out]

**Tuck:** The argument is that children do not have the capacity to consent to taking puberty blockers, because they cannot fully comprehend the long term ramifications of these choices. And you might ask, what ramifications? And I say, well, they argued that puberty blockers are experimental. Are they? No. They have been used for decades on cis children who start puberty, “early”, but now trans kids want to use them and suddenly it's a problem. But wait, you say, aren't puberty blockers reversible? And the answer is yes, but lawyers argued that most youth who start puberty blockers, eventually progressed to HRT. As if puberty blockers are some sort of scary gateway drug that compels children to become transsexuals rather than indicating that most people who start medical transitions as kids, continue to be trans as they grow up. Lawyers even argued that the experience of having your puberty blocked could scar kids, as if they can't just hop off blockers as soon as it starts feeling bad which, as far as I understand, they can. And as if it wouldn't be much more scarring to undergo a puberty you didn't consent to and can't stop.

[Guitar music fades in]

**Tuck:** Because that's the thing about puberty, you can't undo it. Cis people like to obsess over the fact that you can't undo the puberty that comes from hormone replacement therapy, but you also cannot undo the puberty that comes from the hormones that naturally appear in your body. The feeling of horror that many cis people feel when imagining teens on HRT is actually very very very similar to the feeling of horror that many trans people feel when imagining teens being forced to go through any type of puberty, they don't want to go through-- including the puberty that happens when you just don't put any extra hormones into your body. Whether you get your hormones homemade or store bought, they're going to be equally terrible and traumatizing if it's causing changes that you don't want. And equally chill and fine if they're turning you into a person you want to be. Anyway, Keira Bell argues that although she consented to the puberty blockers and the testosterone and the top surgery, she should not have been allowed to do any of this. Because the puberty blockers were a gateway to the HRT and to the surgery, and now she can't breastfeed any baby she might have and she is sad about it. Yes that is sad. It is sad that you most likely cannot breastfeed your hypothetical future children. Although, Ari mentioned something about that last episode so maybe you can. I'm unclear.

But look at the timeline that Keira provided. HRT at 17, top surgery at 20. 20. You cannot stop every teen in the UK from accessing puberty blockers, because you regret getting top surgery when you were 20. And yet, teens *are* now stopped from accessing puberty blockers in the UK. Because the court was asked to decide not whether puberty blockers are the correct and appropriate treatment for the vast majority of youth who consent to them, but whether those youth can properly consent to the treatment. And, the court said that they can't. And now, trans youth cannot access puberty blockers in the United Kingdom. Even though, for example, a 2019 study published in the Medical Journal of Pediatrics found that trans folks who have access to puberty blockers have significantly lower lifetime suicidal ideation and severe psychological distress than trans folks who wanted puberty blockers but could not access them. I'm trying really hard not to pin this whole thing on Keira, because she's a young woman of color and it's not fair to put this, like, national and global transphobia just on her. It is sad when someone regrets a gender transition. It is sad when someone regrets any decision that they make, and maybe Keira will regret this lawsuit someday. But it is more sad when you leave hundreds of kids to go through a largely irreversible puberty, that they didn't consent to, knowing that it may well increase their lifetime suicidality, because the alternative seems worse to a handful of cis adults. This sucks and is bad, and I don't have a real fun, hopeful spin on it. If you do let me know, I guess. But in the meantime, all of Beth Easton’s merch designs from the very beginning, have benefited Gendered Intelligence, an organization in the UK that provides much needed support for trans youth. We've got one of Beth's designs in the shop right now, and very fittingly, it says “trans kids are wonderful.” I suggest you check it out. This has been this week in gender.

[Chime music]

[Record scratch]

**Tuck**: Hey friends, it’s Tuck, popping in from the future with a couple of corrections on the segment. I knew there would be some. The first is that this ruling predominantly affects health care provided by the NHS, which is the UK publicly funded health care system. Dr. Harry Joesphine, reached out to us on Twitter, saying “We don’t fully know yet how the judgement applies to services based in the UK or to services based internationally, but we believe private services can still practice. I know of at least one UK service and one international service who are still seeing people under 18, but private services don’t put up a ‘will still provide blockers’ notice because every gender clinic in the UK is under mass press scrutiny and campaign pressure.” She also clarified that the effect of the judgement is not so much about the court outright banning blockers and HRT, for youth. It is more about the services just not doing those things anymore because they’re afraid to get sued. So NHS England doesn’t actually have to change their policy yet. They could wait for the results of the appeal which come in 2022, but they changed it anyway. So boo. The other correction is that the case only affects puberty blockers and what not in England and Whales. The youth gender clinic run by NHS Scotland is still prescribing puberty blockers and hormones just the same as they were before, but Dr. Harry Joesphine warns us that there is a campaign to change this in Scotland. So trans youth there could really use your support and solidarity to make sure they can access these services. This should go without saying but if you’re a trans youth in the UK, please reach out to resources like Mermaids or Gendered Intelligence for more information. Do not listen to me, an American, who put this together from skimming four websites. Okay this has been Tuesday night in gender.

[Chime music]

**Tuck**: Salimatu Amabebe is a Portland based chef multimedia artist and the founder and director of Black Feast. Amabebe’s work focuses on the intersection of food and art, drawing from family memories, Nigerian recipes and Black culinary history.

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

**Salimatu**: I identify as trans and nonbinary.

**Tuck**: --- and what pronouns do you use?

**Salimatu:** I use they and he.

**Tuck**: So I've known you for a long time, and I feel like there was a span of literally years between the time when you started talking about being nonbinary to me, or using they/them pronouns, and the time when you started talking about it more publicly and enforcing it with people in your life. Whether that's like friends or family or people who are writing about you. So, what has that process been like?

**Salimatu**: Yeah, I was actually thinking about that because I was thinking about the first time that we were doing a podcast together as like *cis* people. Extreme quotes. I guess I feel like everything around gender for me has just been I'm just gonna do what I want and not tell people. Then just slowly confuse them, and then when they ask for clarification, like, “oh, yeah, didn't you know? These are my pronouns. I know I never announced it to you.” And you know, I think that our relationship has been a big, a big part of that and having other really good friendships where people just were so ready to accept me calling myself whatever I wanted to call myself or using whatever pronouns. And we're so willing to adapt to that. I mean, I think years ago, I was thinking about, “oh, I actually, it would feel really really good to use he/him pronouns,” but that seems so far away from what I could ask for. It would just be almost me trying to confuse people or something like that. Or that's how it would be received. So then having people in my life who were like, “I'll call you whenever you want. Oh you're thinking about he/him? Okay. Do you want me to do that? Oh you're thinking about they/them. Do you want me to do that?” I think that being able to just say yes to that and not actually have to ask people even, but just even implying that having friends in my life, offer that to me. I think that that's you know, that's something that you did is, you offered that to me. Starting out kind of small and having people use they/them pronouns and then slowly being able to transition over to saying okay they/he pronouns.

Next to having friends who were doing that for me, I think it also started with work things. So when people would write about me because there was that aspect of work that, you know, where I was doing interviews and things like that. And talking to people who I did not know them and maybe would never meet them in person. So it was a lot easier to ask, “yeah, in this article, could you use these pronouns for me?” Then once you have an article written about you, that has your correct pronouns, it makes it a lot easier for then other people to respect that because it's in print, apparently (laughs). So, that means it's real. So, I think that that wasn't really a strategy that I thought about. That's something that I did, because it felt easier than actually talking to my family about it.

**Tuck:** Speaking of the way that you're written about in articles. There was a company that approached you for an interview. That was very like “we are women owned and women made and we highlight women on our website” and like you could have been, like, “no, I'm not a woman I'm not going to participate.” But instead you did the whole interview but changed all of the pronouns to he/him and, which is very powerful. Also, that was the first time that I have seen an article like use he/him pronouns for you exclusively so everyone in our house was like, “did you see this article? Look at him.” Did that feel like a big moment to you?

**Salimatu:** It was because I haven't talked to that many people in my life, about even. You know, I had a friend who used he/him pronouns, and it felt so good but also kind of like, oh... well... but… but this is happening? And really good and also kind of scary. I was saying to my partner that I was really excited for when I could see that in print, when I could do an interview and really asked for that. So then when that happened, I wasn't fully prepared for it? But it was really cool. It was also cool because I have had pretty short hair for a while and that was just like the first time since I was 17, that I had long braids. So I was just in my long braids like he/him. Yes. Fuck your gender ideas.

But also, I wanted to share that with people and share that with my family, and no one asked me about it. So I feel almost like people thought it was a typo or something. There is a typo very consistently, through the entire article. So, yeah, it felt both powerful and also maybe it just served to confuse people in my life. Which is also fine. Gender is confusing.

**Tuck:** It is. It is. There are other people in our lives who are also exploring gender as confusing as it is. In fact, I would argue, most people in our lives are exploring gender. Something that came up in a conversation with us yesterday, is this misconception that to be trans, you have to hate your body for some reason? Can you talk about being trans and also loving your body?

**Salimatu:** You can absolutely be trans and love your body. I think that there's a big misconception that you need to modify your body in some way or change your body in some way, in order to be legitimate as a trans person. Or that you need to be like taking testosterone or taking hormones in order to be legitimate. I mean, with gender, as with anything, it's really important to interrogate who creates those definitions and who benefits from them. This idea that you don't understand yourself, or that because you feel one way, that means that you have to want all of these other things, is really wild. It doesn't make any sense when you think about it. If being trans is about that exploration and about that kind of liberation of being able to just kind of do what you want with your body (laughs). Then, you definitely shouldn't have to feel that within that you're confined to these specific actions. In order for that to be recognized or for that to be legitimate. I think that that's something because, of kind, where we get our information about what it means to be trans, or what that representation is? That it often can be really confusing. But yeah, you don't have to. You don't have to do anything (laughs).

**Tuck:** Yeah, I think it's like another form of bio essentialism because the same people are like, if you have a penis you're a boy and you have a vagina you're a girl. They get like one step above that, and they're like, if you want a penis you're a boy and if you want a vagina you’re a girl.

**Salimatu:** (chuckles)

**Tuck:** And it’s like, yeah noooo, that's also wrong.

**Salimatu:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** I mean, it can be true, it can be true in certain instances but it absolutely doesn't need to be. Because you're still conflating gender with biology instead of with the societal and cultural expectations around being a specific gender. Which is the recursive definition of what gender is. Right? Gender is the societal expectations around your gender, in a circle.

**Salimatu:** Right, and also, when you're actually kind of talking to your body on the regular, you might get information that you would otherwise not really find out. So something that I've been noticing is that my gender really fluctuates, maybe it's based on the season? I don't know I'm just, I'm going into a really thottie Fall. Where does this come from... I don't know? But I'm feeling myself, and I'm feeling a new type of clothing and presentation and I'm sure that that will shift also. So it just means that, yeah when we're in a pandemic and I can't go to the gym all the time that I'm going to look differently, and also my feelings about gender might shift for myself too. And that’s totally reasonable.

**Tuck:** You're photographed a lot both because you're in print a lot as a chef and an artist and also because you're a literal model. Does seeing images of yourself all the time affect the way that you think about your gender, the way that you present it?

**Salimatu:** Something that I realized probably within the last year, is that I do drag (laughs). I don't think I understood that about myself. When I was a kid I always had this really strong desire to like be part of the world of drag and like drag queens. And when I was young, I was really sad that I couldn't be a drag queen. I was just like, “oh, maybe in another lifetime.” Now, I feel like there's this persona that I have that comes out for parties, and I don't know if they have a name, but it involves a 36 inch ponytail (laughs).

**Tuck:** I know of them. I’ve seen them.

**Salimatu:** I've loved to dress up my whole life and so modeling is also kind of an opportunity to do that and to just play with presentation. Because I feel so solid in myself, I think that it really helps me to just enjoy that process of building up an image and then being able to kind of take it all off at the end of the day. That is something that I think that I've enjoyed that my entire life. So every time I get ready for the day I'm doing some form of that I love to dress for my enemies not my friends, you know? (laughs) I really, I just, I enjoy a look.

**Tuck:** You have part of your family that's Nigerian and part of your family that's white people from Maine, and that seems like two distinct cultural experiences of growing up. I’m wondering where you got messages of gender and how you were supposed to be, or look or act?

**Salimatu:** Okay, well I'll start, I'll start with when I was born.

**Tuck:** (laughs) A very good place to start.

**Salimatu:** I was born in a house, no. I, I was born in a house. I was born at this guy George's birthday party, when my mom was renting a room in his house with her three kids. Which is, I honestly think really a power move to rent a room in someone's house and then tell them that you're having a home birth. Just like an old white man. Be like, “yes, I will be here in the room birthing my child.” So I was born on his birthday. Really crashed the party there.

It was my birthday last month, and I found this birth letter that my mom wrote to me when I was two months old, and she said that she didn't know my sex as a baby. That when I was born, she just let me exist for a while. She just wanted to hold me as a human. That resonates with me, that experience, I don't know how much that actually would have affected my life. But I think that as a kid, my family really didn't place strong gender ideas on to me. In terms of queerness, in Nigerian culture, it's not super queer and trans friendly all the time. I never came out to my dad when he was alive, but I really don't think that he would have had a problem with it actually. I think at the most he would have found it funny in kind of like a rude way. He really enjoyed having his mind kind of expanded, and he really saw his kids as people that he could learn from when they were adults. You know, even though he was born and raised and lived most of his life in Nigeria, there were a lot of things, you know, in Nigerian culture that were not really working for him and that were not things that he wanted to pass along to us. I think that that was something that he kind of grappled with internally, but I'm really thankful because I think that both of my parents, my parents did not always do the best job, but I think in terms of how they saw gender and sexuality, we just didn't really talk about it. They weren't, “you can be whatever you want,” but they were just gonna like “it's not really any of our business” which it isn’t.

**Tuck**: Is that you haven't told them anything yet because it's none of their business?

**Salimatu:** Kind of yeah (laughs). Yeah, but I think that my family in terms of talking to them about pronouns, it's the most, it's just an inconvenience for them. They're not gonna be like, “oh, great, yay,” but they're also not going to be like, “we hate the gays and the trans.” They're just gonna be like, “that sounds hard, we don't want that.” Maybe. Or maybe they'll be fine.

**Tuck**: I'm trying a new thing on the show where I don't make people talk about gender the whole time. So, tell me about Black Feast.

**Salimatu:** Oh my gosh, okay. Black feast is a food and art event, about celebrating black artists and writers through food. I started it back in... 2017, and it was for me, a way of creating a meal that really centered a black audience. Especially in a food world that is dominated by a lot of white chefs doing pop up things or concept dinners. The first dinners, I was looking at works of art and pieces of writing from Black folks that I felt their work had been kind of buried a little bit more in history and maybe it was not required reading for everyone. I would create culinary interpretations of those works and a four course meal that went along with them. And then, in 2019, my collaborator Annika Hansteen-Izora joined the team. From there we started working with artists who are currently making work. So that artist will then perform work or exhibit work in some way, and I will make food about their work. We're doing it in Portland, California, and in New York up until January. Then we started doing takeout events. And also then also kind of shifted the model to make everything free--- because I think things would be free for Black people. There was a moment, the summer, I'm going to say a moment because it really was a moment, where everyone really wanted to support Black people and give money to Black people. And I was naive in thinking that that support would sustain itself. Just out of pure knowledge, but it has not so we're working on a t-shirt. Coming soon.

**Tuck:** So if people are listening in, they're like, “oh no, now I feel bad because I haven't given any money to Black people since June.” How can they donate to Black feast?

**Salimatu:** They can donate through our Venmo, which is @Blackfeast and cash app, which is @Blackfeast.

**Tuck:** Perfect. All right, here's the pivot back to gender. Do you think being a Black person affects the way people gender you or perceive your gender or the way that you process your own gender? Obviously you can't compare it to not being a Black person but I feel like we touched on this a little bit yesterday.

**Salimatu:** Yeah, I talked with one of my friends about this, and that friendship was also really important to me in kind of my gender journey. That person is East African and West African. I think that there is also a part of being Black but also being Nigerian American, that made me feel like, is this something that is going to be accepted in my community or is this something that is like only going to be accepted in the white queer community? And obviously knowing more about that, I see all of the ways in which non-binary identity has existed in so many cultures forever. There's just different terminology for it.

But I think that growing up as a Black person in the United States, and being identified as a Black person by others, definitely there was a part of womanhood that I didn't feel that I was able to participate in. Scratch that, I think that I wasn't able to participate in any part of womanhood, actually. It just didn't feel like I got to be a part of that, anything from you know crushes, of just not feeling like I was even considered. It's hard to say whether that kind of feeling exempt from that definition, then informs your ideas about gender or whether your ideas about gender, make it so that you're exempt from that definition. But... either way it doesn't really matter, because all of it is interconnected, ideas about what it means to be a woman are also made up in people's minds and people's perceptions about race are also made up in their minds. So like whatever, fuck it.

But yeah. I'm actually really grateful for that. I'm grateful to feel I wasn't considered as part of that, because in some ways that made me feel like I got to escape this gaze that would have informed a lot of how I presented and how I did things and how I moved through the world. It was really painful, as a young person who wanted people to like me and have crushes on me and wanted to be like the people that I saw in magazines. And yet, at the same time having zero representation meant that I got to make rules for myself, and that I got to learn how to see myself as a whole person and not try to conform to any standards because I wasn't included in them anyway.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I don't know why this reminded me of this, and if you don't want to talk about this because it'll blow up your spot I get it. But I just remembered your television show concept and I feel like it feeds into that of representation that doesn't exist right now.

**Salimatu:** Yeah, yeah, Sweet Tooth.

**Tuck:** Tell me about Sweet Tooth if you wanna.

**Salimatu:** Yeah, I do. I'm really excited because I am still working on the pitch deck for Sweet Tooth. So, you know, producers.

**Tuck:** Yeah, if there's one thing I know about the podcast Gender Reveal it's that wealthy Hollywood producers listen to… (laughs)

**Salimatu**: I know this about it too. Hello.

**Tuck:** --- it hoping to find new television shows (laughs).

**Tuck:** That's why we have so much money.

**Salimatu:** Let me put my white voice on. *Sweet Tooth.*

**Tuck:** (laughs)

**Salimatu:** *Producers* (laughs). Yeah, so, Sweet Tooth is a concept for a show that I had, which follows the main characters Sweet Tooth, played by myself, who works for a daytime TV cooking show. And they are, you know, not very happy with their job there because it's making a lot of brownies and cakepops for people watching daytime television. So then kind of in their downtime at home, through scrolling, through the process of scrolling that we all know so well, they start to enter this world of kind of food porn and kink. They start their own channel, like food doming people, and they kind of find a lot of pleasure in doing that and it also is a catalyst for them to explore, you know, their own sexuality and gender. And to kind of create a greater understanding of how pleasure can manifest in their life.

And the idea of the Sweet Tooth is really, I don't know it's close to my heart because, I joke about this a lot where my partner will be like, “do you want tea?” And I'll say yes. And then she'll ask me if I want honey? And I'll be like “are you having honey?” And she'll be like no and I'm like, “no, I don't want to be the sweet tooth.” And it's a joke but, really, when you think about it, it encapsulates a lot of the trivial nature of these concepts that we have developed in our society around like how you're supposed to be. Having a sweet tooth, I think is sometimes looked down upon as not really having willpower and maybe being a little bit childish or immature, because you just want things to be sweet and you can't take the austere cold brown rice or something you know. There are all these concepts that we have that, you know, waking up early is better than someone staying up late. I think that there are cultural roots to that too, but when you add them all up it's okay so I'm supposed to be this person who doesn't fuck and wakes up at dawn and doesn't eat anything sweet. So Sweet Tooth is just kind of about understanding my own love of luxury and pleasure and wanting to live a life that is really pleasure based.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Speaking of pleasure, lol. Do you feel like the way that you date or perceive your relationships has changed as your gender exploration has deepened?

**Salimatu**: I mean yeah, well, I don't date straight people anymore. That's a really big one, actually. And part of that is seeing myself as trans which is a very new thing, actually. I think before even identifying as non-binary, I didn't feel like I could take up space at the trans table, which is, you know, we've also joked about that. It's a very silly idea, but I think for me, that's also about respecting myself, respecting my own identity. And just because someone might look at me and not immediately think that I'm trans, doesn't mean that I'm going to date that person. And doesn't mean that just because, you know, my physicality, appeals to them that they get to label me as cis. I don't know why it took me so long to get to that point for myself. With dating it's hard because I started out being so insecure about everything about myself. A big part of feeling more secure was being in a relationship with someone who really loved me. I think that I really wanted that when I was younger, and I just couldn't find that stability. So I was willing to accept a lot of really shitty behavior from people in that search for that stability. Because I think I just wanted to have the solid partnership in which I could grow and instead it just fucked me up.

So now that I'm in, not one but two very stable partnerships, I’m the pickiest bitch (laughs). I'm so picky. I'm just like, “oh, you think that? Nope.” I have very high standards now, but it's hard for me to give advice. Because if someone doesn't have that, if someone doesn't have a stable partnership, I think you just have to really trust that you will get to that place and that you can be really picky about who you're dating and that you can have those high standards. Because I think so much of dating is knowing the thing that we want, and then doing something else anyway. And knowing the thing that feels right, and then doing the thing that doesn't feel quite right anyway. It makes sense that we do that, because we just want to be loved and seen and supported and cared for. So of course we're gonna make those compromises.

But, yeah, if I were giving someone advice I would just be like, don't make those compromises. Just have really good friends, have really good chosen family, have really good people who support you and your life. Because the wrong relationship is gonna fuck you up every time. Ten times out of ten.

**Tuck:** You're about to move to Berkeley. Is there any part of you that's like, I'm moving to a new place I'm going to reinvent myself in this way or I'm gonna present differently or introduce myself differently because I have a fresh start, of who I am?

**Salimatu:** Yeah, in some ways I think I already did that, maybe on accident, because I went to Berkeley, for this artist residency, that was supposed to be a three month residency and then I ended up staying there for five months. So I think it was just the longest residency ever. But I think a week or two weeks into my residency, was when we had shelter in place so that time I was really living and working out of my studio, and then the minimal interactions that I had were all with new people in my life. It's very recent that I think that I've settled into a place of comfort within trans identity. I think that that was a big part of it, was just having that time by myself and seeing what my response was to myself and what gender felt like without kind of all of the comforts of home, and all of the people that I knew. So it was a lot easier to request the people use the correct pronouns. I was like this is all new for me, so you've all can get it right, because you don't know me in any other context than this. It wasn't intentional, like I want to reinvent myself within the space, but I think it was a very slow and subtle shift. Because it happened in a way that was almost imperceptible to me, and that I just felt that shift rather than seeing it or making any specific actions towards something. I think that made me trust it.

**Tuck:** This is the part of the show where you talk about whatever you want to talk about.

**Salimatu:** Oh, I think that, like this is also relates to being Black and being trans, but I think part of growing up as a Black person in the United States for me has been about unlearning everything that I learned and recognizing that the way that I was taught history is completely false. It makes me very critical, I think I have, sometimes it's a problem that I just have a very critical way of thinking so every, every definition that I have I really break it apart. I love to go to the root of things and see like, “how did this get here, why do we use it this way, what does that actually mean?” Like I was thinking about TERF? Like, how it's weird that that includes radical feminism, because I would really, I really don't think that you can be a radical feminist that excludes trans people. There's kind of this like oxymoron within that. And that nature of being critical of pretty much all terminology, and especially terminology that applies to an identity. That's something that I think also changes the way, or has influenced the way that I think about gender, and I don't really want terms that apply to me that I don't care that much about terms that apply to me. I have felt outside of definitions for so long, and that I also have felt like pain from trying to be a part of those definitions and trying to kind of contort myself into something that is not my size and that really just was never made for me to begin with.

**Tuck:** Given that it is the hell times is there anything you're excited about or looking forward to in the future?

**Salimatu:** Yeah, well I'm gonna be an uncle. I get that babies are not that cool.

**Tuck:** (snort) Says who?

**Salimatu:** I don't know, I just, I feel like people are just really about their babies, and I'm your baby is not that cool, because I am a hater. But also I think that this is like the most life changing thing for me personally, because, you know, my siblings are my three best friends. And so it feels like I get to share this baby with my three best friends, and I get to be a co-co-co-parent. I'm just really excited about attempting to be a positive influence in someone's life and being able to pass along my knowledge around race and gender, and just how to navigate in a dying world.

**Tuck:** Speaking of this baby that's going to grow up into the unknown world. In your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Salimatu:** Hmm, I think that everyone is queer and trans anyway. So, I definitely think that everyone's mom is gay. For sure. All of our moms are gay. We know this. But I just feel like in my future dream world. we just wouldn't have to come out. I mean, you don't have to come out anyway but like it just wouldn't be a thing. We would just be able to exist outside of a binary, always. That seems incredibly reasonable, actually. That feels almost mundane, (laughs) but it doesn't feel radical it feels mundane and I look forward to it being mundane, yeah.

(theme music plays)

**Tuck:** That's gonna do it for this week's show. In the time since we recorded the Salimatu actually did come out to his family and it went... fine. They told me they felt like it was time to come out because this new child was entering their family. So, being an uncle really has already changed their life. Please support Salimatu’s work which I cannot stress enough includes providing free gifts and beautiful food to Black people. Surely, that is something you can get behind. They are at @Blackfeast on Venmo at @Salimatuamabebe on cash app, and their website is blackfeastdinner.com. Salimatu is also on Instagram @black.feast and @salimatuamabebe. We are on Instagram and Twitter at @gendereveal and our website is genderpodcast.com, where you can also find our contact form and transcripts of every episode of the show. Our nonprofit merch shop is at [bit.ly/gendermerch](http://bit.ly/gendermerch) where right now you will find a wide array of beautiful designs by gender reveal alum, Maya Kobe, Nico Stratus and Beth Easton, as well as other trans artists. As always, sales are split between the artist and an organization of the artists choice. And all of these products disappear at the end of January so go take a look now if you’d like. You can support the work we do at patreon.com/gender, where for $5 I will send you stickers in the mail. Today's episode was 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 more feelings about gender.

[theme music stops]

**Salimatu:** Something my dad would always say and something that I think is very true for a lot of Nigerians is like, “Show me your diploma and then show me your boyfriend.” It was very, he would threaten that whoever I brought home would have to do a series of math equations in order to date me because he was a math teacher.

**Tuck:** Well I mean, that's homophobic.

**Salimatu:** Yeah. That was. That was maybe as homophobic as it got.

**Tuck:** You have part of your family. That's Nigerian and part of your family that's like white people from Maine. That seems like two distinct cultural experiences.

**Salimatu:** I mean, slight correction white people from the Midwest.

**Tuck:** Ooooh, so sorry.

**Salimatu:** White people from Michigan. Yeah. So, no.

**Tuck:** Sorry, let me retrack it. You have…

**Salimatu:** (laughing)

**Tuck:** Ahem, stop laughing, you’re fucking up my track.

**Tuck:** You have family that's Nigerian, and you have family that are like white people from the Midwest. Great. I'll put that in instead. Go ahead.

**Salimatu:** But yeah, well now it's funny because I'm going to talk about Maine.

**Tuck:** God damn it Salimatu (laughing). I’m leaving this whole thing in.

**Salimatu:** (dramatically) ohh nooo. Oh no. I’m sorry.

[both laughing loudly]

[END]