**Tuck Woodstock:** Before we start the show, there’s another podcast I want to tell you about, although one you have probably heard of already. If you listen to my show, you know that news and culture shows usually aren’t made with trans folks like us in mind. Trans voices are routinely left out of the conversation even though stories about us are everywhere. The TransLash podcast with Imara Jones is changing that. Imara is a Peabody and Emmy Award winner and also a genius, tbh.

You might remember that she was on the the Gender Reveal podcast recently, episode one of the season, talking about how trans people telling our own stories will literally save trans lives. Imara just released a new episode of her show all about trans love. It features Precious Brady-Davis who is one half of Precious and Miles, the T4T couple on the TLC special, *My Pregnant Husband,* and if that sounds familiar, it’s because we recently interviewed Ari, one half of the other couple on the TLC special, *My Pregnant Husband.* Turns out trans world is very small. Anyway, you can hear that episode and more by tuning in to the TransLash podcast every other Thursday. Subscribe wherever you’re listening right now.

[*Gender Reveal* them music begins]

**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. Hope you’re all hanging in there. This week on the show, I am delighted to share my chat with journalist and podcast host Tre’vell Anderson. I had so much fun talking with Tre’vell about Black film history, trans film futures, whether non-binary TV characters are actually non-binary, how to critique queer film when it’s bad plus what white people need should be doing-

**Tre’vell Anderson:** So, I would love to see more race traitors, more gender traitors-

**Tuck:** … what white people should not be doing-

**Tre’vell:** Maybe white people shouldn’t be saying, “All Black lives matter.”

**Tuck:** … and multiple soup metaphors for gender. I am not going to explain that one. You just gotta listen.

I do ask Tre’vell a question about safety so skip that one if you are not in a space to hear about violence and harassment today.

Also, if you are an astrology queer, I highly recommend sticking around for the post credits clip. Did you know that most episodes this season and several episodes other seasons have had a post credits clip like we’re the Avengers or something? Now you know, so stick around.

Before we get to all that, though, just a couple quick announcements.

First and foremost, you the listener will not care about this but I am so excited to unveil the official Gender Reveal FAQ page. If you go to genderpodcast.com/faq, which I will add in the show notes, you will find 1500 words answering all of y’all’s most frequently asked questions like, “When does the grant open again,” “Do you still need transcription help,” “Why is the merch store empty,” “Can I be on your podcast,” and “Am I trans?” If you have a question for me that’s not on the site, you can obviously still contact me through the contact form at genderpodcast.com but check the FAQ first. Or don’t be mad when you ask me a question and I send you a link.

Also, if you missed it last week, our merch store is stocked with our new February items, including “Nature is Queer & I am Nature” stickers and posters with little intersex cardinals on them, “femmes can be thems” long-sleeved shirts, a really beautiful “they/them” sticker, and our new “Welcome 2 Fabulous Gender Hell” stickers, which I love so much that I already put one on my laptop. That’s all at bit.ly/gendermerch. Just remember all of the merch goes away at the end of month so shop now if you want anything.

Lastly, thank you so, so much to everyone who supports the show and the grant program by joining us on Patreon at patreon.com/gender. If you would like to join us there, just $1 gets you access to our weekly newsletter so it’s a pretty good deal all around. And, with that, it’s time for *This Week in Gender*.

[*This Week in Gender* opening theme]

**Tuck:** This week in gender, it really feels like I should be acknowledging all of the anti-trans schools sports bills currently moving through various state legislatures here in the United States, however, that also sounds very bad so here is the lightning round version of this news.

In the last few days, three states have advanced bills aimed at preventing transgender student athletes, especially trans girls, from competing on sports teams that match their gender. North Dakota passed their bill from the House to the Senate, Mississippi passed one from the Senate to the House, Utah passed theirs from their education committee to the full House, and also, last month, Montana passed a similar bill from the House to the Senate. They’re all making moves.

Keep in mind, though, that while Idaho actually successfully passed a similar law last year, one that blocks trans women and girls from playing on female sports teams, the law was actually blocked in court by Idaho Chief US District Court Judge David C. Nye who suggested that that law is likely unconstitutional and he was therefore preventing the law from being enforced until there is a court ruling on its constitutionality. It’s also important to keep in mind that the 2020 Supreme Court case, Bostock vs Clayton County, Georgia found that workplace discrimination on the basis of gayness or transness violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964. And, while school sports aren’t exactly a workplace, on the first day of his presidency, Joe Biden signed an Executive order extending the protections of Bostock to other areas of queer and trans life.

The order is called Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation and it does what it says on the label. It explicitly includes the line, “Children should be able to learn without worrying whether they will be denied access to the restroom, the locker room, or school sports,” and, when we mentioned a few weeks ago that TERFs are already mad at Joe Biden, this is why.

So, while some of these state bills seem to be direct responses to Bostock and to the Biden administration and to the concept of trans people being allowed to fucking live… Anyway, the Supreme Court case and the Executive order will be helpful tools for judges to block any transphobic laws that are successfully passed by individual states.

Of course, it sucks and is bad that we just have to count on individual judges stepping up to protect entire states of trans women and girls from this really awful, awful and terrible transphobic. We shouldn't have to do any of this. It is fucked up and dehumanizing and exhausting and traumatizing and a waste of time and resources at the best of times and especially in a global pandemic. I am not going to waste our time here today talking about why trans women and girls should be allowed to play sports. We did talk about that a little bit in our chat with Katelyn Burns, if you want to listen to that episode. And if you trans people do want me to get a little more into why trans sports restrictions are bullshit, let me know. I can do it on a future episode.

But, before I go, let me say that these anti-trans girls in sports bills are also unfortunately not the only anti-trans bills out there right now. So, if you are a “cis ally,” I need you to Google around for what might be going on in your state and how you can push back against it. I also highly recommend that everyone follow Chase Strangio on social media (@ChaseStrangio) for updates on these various bills and the way that you can help fight against them.

Remember, if you are trans and especially if you’re a trans woman or girl, one of the ways you can help is just by being you and staying alive. Thank you for being here despite all of this. We’re all on your team. I love you so much. We’re not going anywhere.

This has been *This Week in Gender.*

[*This Week in Gender* closing theme music]

[Background music plays]

**Tuck:** Tre’vell Anderson is an award-winning journalist, social curator, and world changer who always comes to slay. Named to *The Roots* 2020 list of *The 100 Most Influential African Americans,* Tre’vell has dedicated their life to centering those in the margins, gray spaces, and at the intersections of life through a pop culture lens. Formerly the Director of Culture and Entertainment at *Out* magazine, Tre’vell got their start in journalism at the *Los Angeles Times* where they created the beat of *Diversity in Hollywood* with a focus on Black and queer film. Tre’vell is currently editor-at-large for Toronto’s *Extra* and cohost of the Maximum Fun podcast, *Fanti.*

[Background music ends]

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

**Tre’vell:** I identify as a non-binary person of trans experience.

**Tuck:** Can you talk about that wording in specific when you say “non-binary person of trans experience”?

**Tre’vell:** I feel like we all have these ideas about what gender means in its various different ways. Certain words mean certain things to folks. But for me, I feel like, with my gender journey and identification, it’s kind of a conglomeration of a lot of those varying understandings. I am a non-binary person in that I don’t necessarily identify as man or woman. And, for me, that is a trans experience and I find community among trans people. So for me, I think it’s a way of just denoting a further expansion of what trans can look like.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. You just published an article about non-binary people who do or don’t identify as trans, which is something that comes up a lot in the questions we receive for the show. What did you learn in your research for that article about why some non-binary people don’t consider themselves trans despite non-binary generally being seen as an identity under the trans umbrella?

**Tre’vell:** It took me, I think, six or seven months to actually get that piece together. I interviewed a variety of folks and it started with me just realizing the ways in which more and more people that I saw in my timeline were openly identifying, I guess, as non-binary but there would be an explicit distance they put between themselves and trans community and I just always found that interesting. It led me to the question of what does it really mean to be non-binary? And, in terms of what I learned, I don’t want to say I haven’t learned anything but I feel like I have more questions than I had going into it because we as queer and trans people, we allow so much grace and we hold so much multiplicities, right? So much so that a term can mean one thing to you and it can mean a completely different thing to me and both are valid.

And I think, while that imagination is perhaps a promised land that we’d all like to get to, I’m not sure that the broader society, in terms of the ways in which we move through this world can hold that right now. And so, I really wanted to offer the question, or this idea rather, of is there a chance that non-binary people who say they’re not trans, that that identification in their head is somehow deeply rooted in some sort of internalized transphobia or potentially some sort of trans essentialist idea of what it means to be a man or woman or have a certain type of body? And for me, the piece was really about trying to have that convo with other non-binary trans folks to see if I could come to some sort of conclusion, which I didn’t.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah, and I’m sure it’s different with every person but I feel that it is this combination, in many cases, of internalized transphobia very much so, knowing that trans people are treated horribly by society and not wanting to be treated horribly by society and this sense of imposter syndrome that people aren’t trans enough to be called trans. Like, “I’m non-binary but I haven’t medically transitioned.” There’s this idea that being transgender is inherently about our bodies and medicalization even though the word transgender was actually, I believe, developed to stand apart from transsexual and be actually less medicalized, right?

**Tre’vell:** Right.

**Tuck:** I think that’s interesting.

**Tre’vell:** Yeah, and I will say I’ve been scrolling through the tweets and stuff from the piece when I sent it out and a number of people have verbalized that same consternation, if you will, feeling as if they could not claim they could claim a trans identity because they would never face the type of oppression or marginalization that a Black trans woman might face and it ends up becoming this gobbledygook type of conversation, ultimately because, I say in the piece, gender is a scam. Even though we are talking about all these words, what they mean for us, how we move through the world, this idea of even having to put a label on ourselves is the real gag of it all. [laughs] Ideally, we will abolish gender.

We will figure out some other way to name ourselves and claim our identities but, in this current moment, this is what we’re dealing with and I think there’s just so much complexity in it, that it’s one of those types of conversations that is actually tough to have in public and I was very nervous about the piece. People in our community, they will drag you with the quickness, honey, okay? And I also didn’t want it to come off as belittling anyone’s particular identity and how they move through the world and that’s always a tough line to walk but that’s definitely something we need to be talking more about, I think.

**Tuck:** Yeah, and I think that it was really smart to make the article more questions than answers because, if you try to have one answer for everyone’s gender, you’re always going to fail but having this open question article form, I think, was really smart. And another smart thing I think that you did to bring people with different experiences along with you is talked about how years ago, you didn’t identify with trans and actively avoided being labeled as trans and that turning point was when you were asked to contribute to the film, *Disclosure,* which explicitly only had trans people as talking heads. Can you talk about that experience?

**Tre'vell:** Yeah! I feel like, one of the terms that I more often used was gender non-conforming because that terminology seemed to be an easy answer for whatever personal questions I was grappling with as well the external questions I was getting from family and friends and colleagues and all of that. So, gender non-conforming, people were like, “Oh! Gender, I know what that is. Nonconforming, know what that is. Cool! Go do you.” So I just kept doing that but I was still using similar language. I started, around that time, saying that “I don’t exist in the pink or the blue,” but in the lavender expanses and recesses of life-

**Tuck:** So gay, so gay. [laughs]

**Tre’vell:** You know! To kinda describe the special area that I feel like I’m in but still was really running away from the idea of being trans mainly because I was one of those folks who thought I needed to engage with the medical establishment in order to be trans and that is obviously not necessary. You don’t have to have gender affirming surgery or have to go on hormones to identify and live and experience the world as a trans person. Then, *Disclosure* popped up. I was working at the *Los Angeles Times* and doing a lot of coverage on queer film and trans representation and all of that. I got this email detailing this documentary, Laverne Cox is executive producing, they only want trans people in it, and I was like, “Oh. Y’all emailed the wrong person.”

[laughter]

But then, I took time before I responded and I was like, “Why do I not feel like I am trans? Why do I feel like I am running from this type of terminology?” And I think that helped catalyze my own personal work around divorcing transness from some sort of medical intervention and realizing the ways in which I, as a Black queer trans femme person, moved through the world and, by the nature of my existence am a repudiation of so many of the things I am, allegedly, not supposed to be or that aren’t supposed to exist. It caused me to, I think, kind of just turn the eye on myself and ask myself various questions before I could respond to them and say, “Yes, I’ll be part of the documentary.”

**Tuck:** Now, you’re part of one of the greatest documentaries of all time. It worked out.

[laughter]

Before we get too far, I want to ask what pronouns?

**Tre’vell:** I use they/them pronouns but I also will answer to other pronouns that are said respectfully, which I think is another potential point of contention when we have conversations about our identities as queer and trans people. I’m one of those people who… I’ve been in so many spaces and read as male so much long before I even started seriously grappling with my gender journey. And ultimately, both they/them as well as he/him and she/her… None of them really are a home for me. But more and more, I will say I am… When I do public-facing things, I use they/them, mainly as a means, I think, of foreseeing that these people who are paying me to show up in a particular space to wrap their mouths around gender neutral pronouns for folks so that it’s easier to come across a non-binary person or someone who uses they/them pronouns down the road.

**Tuck:** You had an article in last December with the headline *Nonbinary TV Characters Had a Landmark Year; Advocates Say Hold the Applause.* I’m curious what your take is on whether we should be applauding-

[laughter]

… non-binary TV characters or not, the year that they’ve had and the increase in representation.

**Tre’vell:** I feel like so many of the conversations I have about identity and representation, I often have to just note there’s a double-edged sword going, right? On the one hand, it’s great that these characters exist. But on the other hand, many of these characters -- I don’t think -- represent the fullness of our experiences as non-binary people. Some of these characters, in my mind and in how I read them and interpret them, they’re actually gay characters but the cis creator of them has thrown a non-binary label on it because they saw it on social media or something.

And I think that’s the next stage of this convo when we talk about non-binary representation is how do you know a character actually is non-binary besides just putting some makeup and some lipstick on them and maybe they have some facial hair? Can we read in terms of the subtext and the text of the character their non-binary experience? And I think that that’s a little touch and go because to be non-binary looks so many different ways right now, right? But that’s my thought in terms of when I look at TV in particular and see the handful, or maybe two handfuls, of non-binary characters that are out there.

**Tuck:** Right! And if we think about the non-binary characters that are out there and if we think about the fact that the majority of Americans somehow think they’ve never met a non-binary person. You know, so many people are basing their knowledge of non-binary people just off of these few characters that were typically written by cis people, though not always. And I think that the representation of, specifically non-binary people has been so white and so AFAB, so sort of androgynous or trans masculine. Is that ever something that you run up against with people, I don't know, being confused that non-binary people can look a way other than Asia Kate Dillon? No offense to Asia Kate Dillon. They’re great but beyond that…

**Tre’vell:** Well, no. Definitely, I think that’s part of the convo that we have to have. Asia Kate Dillon was the first -- “the first” -- and they comport themselves in a particular type of way that forced people to transcribe that comportment on non-binary identity. So when you have other people coming out and saying that they’re non-binary and they don’t look like Asia Kate Dillon, there’s a disconnect for a lot of people. But you can comport yourself in any particular way and still be non-binary.

I think, ultimately, when I think about it, I think that the Hollywood apparatus in and of itself is representative of broader society and broader culture and by that, I mean they’re not doing the work on the whole to make sure that these characters represent the vastness of our experience. It's tough because I also think there's... When we talk about non-binary characters, we also have to bring race into it. I think the Black non-binary experience, though there is not one Black binary non-binary experience, it is going to be informed by us being in this white supremacist society. I think of a character like Uncle Clifford on P-Valley. They call her a non-binary character. She's assigned male at birth but uses female pronouns and is kind of the only non-binary, only trans, only queer person in their world except for this budding relationship that they end up having with this rapper.

But that is a character to me that feels very familiar based on my community but doesn't feel prolifically non-binary. It just feels like an effeminate gay man and I think those are the moments where there is still work to be done. And I also add some of these characters are being play by non-binary people themselves whether they're trans or not. A lot of those actors are giving extra of themselves to inform the storyline that ends up happening on screen. And while I think I'm grateful that they're there and able to do that, they shouldn't have to. There should be someone who can speak to these experiences in the writer’s room. There should be a host of non-binary creators who are getting the first look deals and the production deals just like everybody else. But it's good that they're there for the time being.

**Tuck:** Right. I thought of that when, in one of your articles, you mentioned that there were non-binary folks on sets who were contributing a lot of their own personal information about being trans or non-binary into the character because no one else on staff knew things. And I was thinking, “Wow, I really hope that person was paid an extra consulting rate or an extra script punch-up rate if they’re going to be the cultural-”

**Tre’vell:** And you know they weren’t.

**Tuck:** No, they weren't. But like they should be if they're being a cultural consultant on their own projects, they should be getting compensated for that even though clearly, they're not. The other thing that struck me when you were talking about Uncle Clifford is when you said that she's the only non-binary or trans character because how often do we know a trans person that doesn't hang out with other trans people?

**Tre’vell:** My point exactly.

 **Tuck:** It's ridiculous to have one character that's trans. We go in herds. We have to for safety.

**Tre’vell:** That, for me, is something that has stuck out to me in terms of those intangible things that make you know that something is off with this character but you're not necessarily always able to put it into words. The ways in which these non-binary characters in particular are the lonely only in these communities for however long the character is on the show. It's just questioning to me, especially with Uncle Clifford. Yes it's all set in this fictional Mississippi town. But queer people always find each other. And when you have, even more so, a trans non-binary character and they're the only one of them in a particular space, it just makes me raise my eyebrow and go, “Hmm.”

**Tuck:** One more thought, I think in a really similar vein, is that you wrote this great piece for *Out* that was called *Why Do We Only Love Gender Bending When White Twinks Do It?* which talked more about folks who aren't necessarily non-binary or at least who aren't out as of non-binary but who are celebrated for their gender-bending or their nonconformity to masculinity more than actual trans people. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

**Tre’vell:** You know I just give the biggest eye roll. This is not to take anything away from Harry Styles or Jaden Smith or Young Thug or insert name here. This isn't to take anything away from them getting their bag, getting their accolade, wanting to put on a dress or whatever. At the same time, there are folks who aren't just putting on a “non-binary aesthetic" for fashion. There are folks who, every day that we step outside of our door the way in which we show up in the world is the subject of violence. We love to look at a body such as a Jaden Smith or a Harry Styles in a dress and say, “Yes, that is fashion. Yes, that is new age. Yes, work, Mama. This. Uh-huh.”

But then, you have someone like Alok, for example, or myself. We're not able to actualize those same type of material benefits that primarily cis men are reaping from their gender-nonconforming play. I think that is the issue for me. I want to be in a world where I don't have to worry about getting my ass beat because I'm walking down the street in heels and a dress. That's the thing that we need to be discussing, not the fact that they're doing it. But the fact that the other people who are doing it are getting the shit beat out of them for the same thing. And I also want to be in the same world where Harry Styles can be in a dress on the cover of *Vogue* and no one is questioning his identity. That’s the promised land that I’m trying to be at and we're not there yet.

**Tuck:** How often do you think about safety when you're deciding how to present or how to move through the world?

**Tre’vell:** I was going to say often but that also feels a little sad to say often. But hell, it’s the reality. I used to live in a different area in L.A. and I remember one day I was coming from the gym… This was obviously in a pre-pandemic world. I was coming from the gym. I had on these booty shorts or whatever and I always had my nails done. I'm walking into my apartment complex and there's this guy who's walking his dog. He calls out to me. I'm minding my business and then, he starts throwing these offensive words and stuff in my direction. And then, he sics him and his dog on me. Like they literally come up to my gate.

**Tuck:** Oh, god.

**Tre’vell:** Luckily, the gate closes before he gets there but I literally decided to move out of that neighborhood for that reason. I do think often about what shoes am I wearing? Do I need to keep my keys in my hand with a key sticking out of my fist just in case? Do I need to get me a little gadget? And, for me, if I do carry a gadget, is the award show going to let me get on the red carpet with it? Those types of barriers to protecting ourselves even in L.A. which is deemed as this liberal bastion. I think about my safety often but I persist nevertheless, you know, because I already bought the cute looking shoes. I'm not going to wear them around the house. [laughs] And also the world needs to see this brilliance and this excellence.

So we just cross our fingers and hope for the best because what's the alternative, right? The alternative is to not live our lives out loud. That's not joy. That's not true safety. Maybe it's survival but there's definitely very little thriving that can happen when you are cowering because of the violence that you might face. So yeah, we push through in spite of it and we do what we have to do in order to not only survive those particular moments that are bound to happen but to also thrive on the other end of them.

 **Tuck:** Something I really admire about you is that you don't come across as someone who compromises on who they are or how they present to make cis white people comfortable. So I'm curious if you have advice for listeners because I know a lot of our listeners do struggle to find confidence or take up space in their gender.

**Tre’vell:** Even though I am a non-binary person trans experience, I'm Black and queer and a variety of other things that people might read as having no privilege, I also have a lot of privilege. I've got a couple of degrees under my belt, the bills are paid, I'm not wanting for anything. So I have a lot of privilege that I think helps me protect myself in a variety of ways and I have the luxury that my career, where it is now, is one in which I can be professionally non-binary, professionally trans, and professionally maybe a little rabble-rouser, if you will, in terms of not really having to work to deal with cishet white supremacist foolishness and being able to call it out that way.

But I have so many community members, so many mentees, some family members that don't have those privileges, who are still in Charleston, South Carolina where I was born and, for me, the one thing I say first and foremost is always your safety is paramount. We have to have a conversation about what our safety looks like when it comes to us living out loud because we still live in this trash ass, transphobic, problematic ass society. Then secondly, I try to talk to people about that personal internal work and resolve that is necessary to move past just a conversation about our survival to what our excellence and beauty can look like. For me, one thing that had been successful was always trying to find those true community members, those true allies and accomplices that, if I need to go out in the streets, they'll be right there with me or, if I need to go to the HR people, they'll be right there with me. But I don't know.

It's tough for me to talk about or give advice in terms of how other people can do them because I'm very much one of those people who firmly believes I can't give you a blueprint on how to survive, unfortunately, because you're going to be going through something uniquely different. So for me, I tell people all the time, listen to all these other people who talk about how they survived, how they got through, how they made it, and you just pull those little slithers each and every one of them to create your own kind of gumbo of identity that works for you.

**Tuck:** I love that generally and I really love it being a dumbo. That's really fun.

**Tre’vell:** [laughs] I like to eat, okay? I'm sorry.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Wonderful. Now, I'm very hungry.

**Tre’vell:** [laughs]

**Tuck:** I think, speaking of allyship and safety, folks who strive to be allies to trans people, Black people… They have probably heard the phrase “All Black lives matter.” My understanding is it's meant as a way to include queer and trans people more overtly in that movement. It also contains the words “All lives matter.” You talked about this on your podcast, Fanti, which I want to recommend to anyone who is listening. It's a wonderful show but I would love for you to talk to us because I know a lot of white people listen to the show. How we’re feeling about “Black lives matter” and also just, in general, ways that we can be better allies in a movement for Black trans lives.

**Tre’vell:** I have complex feelings about “All Black lives matter,” mainly that Black Lives Matter, as it was founded, was by queer people whose politics is not exclusionary to queer and trans people. But we know that “Black lives matter” has become its own mantra, its own thing outside of whatever the initial intentions were by its founder. So the idea of explicitly saying that Black queer and trans lives matter just like Black cishet men lives matter and Black women's lives matter is important in as far as restructuring folks’ understandings of individual work. Now, I say that also thinking that maybe white people shouldn't be saying, “All Black lives matter,” because oftentimes it can then get contorted into something else beyond the intentions, I think, of the people who say, “All Black lives matter.”

For me, my default is, “Listen. Black lives matter, Black queer lives matter, Black trans lives matter.” I go that route and I encourage other people just to be specific with what you're talking about. “Black lives matter” works to me, but if you need and feel that there is some sort of erasure, particularly for Black folks of a community that you might belong to, then that's where the “Black queer lives matter, Black trans lives matter” come from and hopefully, the broader community of folks who are on the ground doing this organizing work who aren’t queer and trans and aren't allies and accomplices will begin to understand that the freedom that they're fighting for will not come to pass if Black queer and trans people don't also get a slice of freedom as well.

**Tuck:** Yeah and I think to that end it’s also why it's so important for folks, if they do want to say, “Black trans lives matter,” that they go beyond just putting that in their Instagram bio as a cool signal that they know about these things, but actually finding demonstrable ways to make that a part of their lives.

**Tre’vell:** Oh, yeah. I hope that everyone realizes that you've got to go beyond those cursory social media type nods. Those are great. Don't get me wrong. Keep doing that because I do think it does help spread various messages. But what are you literally doing physically to be an accomplice? We have an episode on our podcast called *Okay Allies, Now Let's Get in Formation!* And it features Jarrett Lucas who is a Black gay man. He’s the executive director of The Stonewall Community Foundation. And he introduced me to this idea that I think is really useful for people who are looking to align themselves with various communities. He talks about how, one, it's important to situate oneself in the activity that you say you are fighting against. For example, instead of calling yourself an anti-racist, he says that he thinks it's important for you to actually say you are racist and say that you are working to not be. Then, in terms of folks who are trying to be allies and supporters of Black folks in particular, he was like white people need to classify themselves as race traitors. They need to see and have an understanding that they too have to give up something in order to truly advocate on behalf of other folks. So I would love to see more race traitors or gender traitors. You know folks who realize and are using their money, their bodies, their minds to support Black queer and trans led efforts. Another thing that I often tell people is you also don't have to be in the streets at a protest.

What are you doing in your local friend group? How are you perpetuating and allowing your friend to keep telling transphobic jokes because you just sit there and you don't say anything? Start saying something. Or when you hear something weird, or off I should say, in a company meeting and you don't say anything. You wait until after the meeting and you know it's bad, you know it feels wrong but you just let it happen. Those are the moments when we need people to actually intervene. So maybe you don't have the money to do a monthly donation to somebody but I promise you, if you are working to change behavior in the ways that you can in your local community that is important as well.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I think something that comes up so often with cis people and white people so much is the concept of being unsafe versus being uncomfortable and feeling like, if you bring something up in a meeting, you are doing something wrong or it is dangerous for you. It could be dangerous for you but I think that people for whom it is not dangerous also think that it's dangerous for them.

**Tre’vell:** Yeah

**Tuck:** There's a lot of self-evaluating that really needs to happen that’s, “Okay, if I don’t speak up, what will happen?” Probably nothing. Nothing is not an acceptable answer for what could happen in this situation so who is going to be the person to speak up?

**Tre’vell:** Those of us with privilege often don't realize we have privilege.

**Tuck:** Yes exactly.

**Tre’vell:** And that is why we end up thinking that, “Oh, I can't tell them that's a bad joke or that they shouldn't say that or that that's transphobic,” or whatever the case may be because we don't realize that actually ain't shit going to happen to us if we say something but it will happen, something might happen to the person who is the subject of that particular ire or horrible comment that was made. We just have to get out of that idea, I think, that we don't have a voice that we can't say anything. I think more often than not, you'll be surprised what you can actually do. In so many of these situations, the same thing that a Black person or queer person or trans person might say... That's received automatically as aggressive sometimes just because of who we are. And when a non-Black person or non-brown person says the same exact thing, it’s received differently by those who are in power. And we don't think like that often. I think.

**Tuck:** Actually, thinking of a related thing, you are the president of NABJLA, which is incredible. I love that for everyone. Can you talk about your experiences with that? I am particularly interested in if you’ve been able to or interested in enacting any sort of, I’m going to call it a queer and trans agenda with that position of power?

**Tre’vell:** [laughs] Yeah. I have been president of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists for four years. Maybe by the time they’re listening to this, I won't be president anymore because I'm not running for re-election. Praise the lord. But in addition to the local chapter, I’m also Region 4 director and a member of the National Organization’s board, on which I'm also co-chair of our LGBTQ task force. So there is very much so a queer and trans agenda that I am peddling along with my co-chair Femi Redwood who is a broadcast journalist.

Ultimately, we want to ensure that, one, Black journalists who are LGBTQ feel like they can join an organization like NABJ and be their full selves and, two, we want to make sure that Black journalists are as equipped as possible to cover LGBTQ issues in the ways that they should. And what we know is that broader media landscape continuously shows us every single day that motherfuckers don't know shit or they are purposely ignoring shit or they are letting their Bible-based homophobia and transphobia seep into their coverage or whatever the case may be. So, yeah, that has been something that I have been working on for the last four years both in the local chapter as well as the national organization. You know, it... And I've said this publicly before so I won't get in trouble. Or maybe I will. Who knows? But it's been tough but we have small wins more so than we have big wins but the small wins just as matter just as much.

**Tuck:** Do you have any examples of small wins that you've had in the last four years?

**Tre’vell:** To be honest, I think a small win, and maybe it's actually bigger than small, but in November, our national president of the organization published an open letter saying that LABJ will be a home and a safe space for LGBTQ people. We worked with them to update our code of conduct to include terms that reject and make it unacceptable for homophobia, transphobia, etc. I think that, maybe from the outside looking in, that sounds very small. But we are an organization that has historically not had these conversations and definitely not had these conversations publicly. I was happy to at least, see, one, a statement released based on some of the internal organizing that we were doing and, two, a statement that was unequivocal and wasn't waffling.

But literally was like, “We not doing that shit.” That is a win for me. And then a second win, I think, attached to that is we had our board actually do an LGBTQ sensitivity training which is the first time the organization has done that in its 45+ year history. It was mandatory for the entire board to be there and I think we're still waiting to see if a training like that actually had material changes in how we approach various conversations within the organization but it definitely is a start to say the least.

**Tuck:** I think they are big wins because I think that so many things that would be the biggest wins are things that we can't necessarily measure right now or think that we can't just impose but the things that you could change, you did and I think that's awesome.

**Tre’vell:** Yeah. It been tough.

[laughter]

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Tre’vell:** Because we're just dealing with a lot. We're not just trying to teach new skills to people. We're also working with folks’ individual ideas about identity and what that means, the typical Gender 101 type conversation that we have with people about gender neutral pronouns and trans and non-binary. What do these terms mean? Why you shouldn’t out people. All those types of things. We're having those conversations constantly, which I think for me is frustrating but I realized the bigger project at work is that I need these journalists to be able to go into their newsrooms across this country and across the globe and be able to accurately report on queer and trans people when we show up in their coverage area no matter what their beat is.

And right now I don't think we can confidently say that the 4,000 some-odd members of NABJ in particular and I would also branch this out to other journalism serving organizations, AAJA, NAHJ, even NLGJA. I don't think that our base of reporters and media makers have that skill-set or that compassion present in their work.

**Tuck:** I agree. You're not wrong.

**Tre’vell:** [laughs]

**Tuck:** I have a completely different queer media question for you which is I was talking to a friend a couple months ago about lesbian movies and specifically how so many lesbian movies are either very tragic or very bad. But obviously we watch them because we love gay content. So as a media critic who focuses on Black and queer stories, how do you balance celebrating the fact that these stories are being told and holding them accountable for their artistic merit and not having an unreasonably high bar where we expect every piece of media we see ourselves in to be everything for all of us.

**Tre’vell:** Yeah it's tough because, in addition to having to grapple with this with queer film and trans films and representation, I also do it with Black movies as well that may or may not be queer or trans and I think both communities are still grappling to truly see ourselves fully represented in a variety of ways. I take it on a case-by-case basis. I remember when *Lavina* came out, which was a first of its kind even though the movie probably really should have focused on one of the Black characters to be more interesting and engaging but guess what? I cry every time at that final scene in the movie. So, here we are, okay? And I think it's important that we hold the complexity of it. I think we can recognize the history-making moment many of these films have while also taking a critical eye to it. I do think, for me when I'm covering these things, I try to be clear about recognizing the importance of something in the broader scheme of Hollywood entertainment while also recognizing that we deserve more. We deserve something that is better than this.

We deserve something that is more expansive than this but also it's great that we have it, too. What we know is that this trash industry we call Hollywood is very much interested in money. And when a movie comes out that features queer people that doesn't have a huge amount of support, whether the movie is good or bad, that does impact production of other movies. I feel like that's something we can't ignore. And at the same time that type of approach in this industry needs to be obliterated so that we can say that *Happiest Season* could’ve been a better movie focused on somebody else. No shade. It just could have, right? And yeah, we just need more and I feel like, as a community, when we see these not as great representations of our community or, you mentioned lesbian movies. So many of the lesbian movies are period pieces. Are there not any lesbians in 2021?

**Tuck:** [laughs] There's two and they were in *Happiest Season.*

**Tre’vell:** [laughs] Exactly, right? I think we have to get comfortable asking questions. We have to get comfortable realizing that something can be great and historical but also deserves the same type of critique we would give insert white cishet male production here. I refuse to engage in the type of criticism that turns my eye to the worst parts of something just because we've never seen it before or just because it's historical. No, that shit is trash. Or, like I do with *P-Valley*... I'm very clear that I love the show. I really enjoy the show. But that character, Uncle Clifford? Y'all need to do something on that motherfucker. Something ain't right. Something's not hitting, right? And we’ve got to have more of those conversations. We’ve got to hold space for more of that complexity and multiplicity at the same time.

**Tuck:** Yeah I actually am going to throw in a little bonus question because I was talking to Zackary Drucker-

**Tre’vell:** Love.

**Tuck:** ... the other day about this and I would love to hear your thoughts as well. We were talking about the transgender tipping point but specifically, what do we think is going to be on the other side of the tipping point? Do we think there's going to be a moment in the near future where we actually see fewer trans and non-binary characters?

**Tre’vell:** Well, at this point in the conversation, I often use a comparative Black representation and Black Hollywood and I think about the ways in which there have been other moments prior to now in which Black folks had landmark and huge representation on screen. And I particularly think of a Blaxploitation period. And yes, I know those movies are trash on the whole and all of that but people were working and you could go to the picture show every weekend and see Black people on the screen and Blaxploitation helped establish and solidify various Black folks’ careers at that particular time but when the NAACP and various Black communities started realizing that Blaxploitation was the only type of way Black movies that were getting made around that time period, especially with those types of budget and investments.

We see a down turn immediately after the Blaxploitation period in terms of the opportunities available for Black folks, in terms of the vastness of Black representation that we would see then. That is the blowback from Black folks not being grateful enough that you had jobs so I do think that on the other end of this whole transgender tipping point conversation, especially when we are still adding more better, more nuanced, more well-rounded characters in representation, not to mention trans creators in the director's chair, at the top of showrunner sheet, those different types of roles, I think we will see a blowback. I think we will see a decrease of non-binary characters and trans characters. What's going to happen when *Pose* is no longer on TV?

**Tuck:** Right.

**Tre’vell:** All of those great numbers that GLAAD always releases about how great we're doing? So much of that is literally in that one show. And we love Ryan Murphy but he can't do it all on his own. Shonda Rhimes can't do it all on her own. Greg Berlanti, Lena Waithe… They can't do it all on their own. They're trying to. Don't get me wrong. They're doing what they can. But there's going to be a blow back. There's going to be less roles. There's going to be a regression in the same way that Donald Trump was our country's response to Obama. We're going to see that in Hollywood and in representation unless we see a meaningful shift in the industry in terms of who’s leading it. When you look at the C suite of all these different studios, people who are controlling the purse strings, on average, they haven’t changed in the last 20, 30, 40 years. Maybe the individual has changed maybe but I promise you, on the whole, it’s still a whole bunch of cis white folks. And that is the problem.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. The systems of power, we can’t-

**Tre’vell:** Yes! We need to blow up all the shit, okay? We need to blow it all up, start all over, build something new, and use our imaginations. We’re not there yet. I do want to give a shout out to the work that I know Angelica Ross is doing and Rain Valdez are doing with their own production companies. Laverne has a number of things in the works. Shout out to Zackary Drucker and Jen Richards, and you know, all of the girls are doing the thing. But there are broader systems that we as a broader industry have to figure out how we intervene on.

**Tuck:** I don’t think I’ve thought about how it’s all women who are just like, “Don’t worry, everybody. We’ll fix it for you.” But they’re wonderful and they shouldn’t have to single handedly counteract an entire industry.

**Tre’vell:** Yeah, and I know they’re tired. I know they’re tired. Because I’m tired of covering it, okay? So I know they’re tired of doing the work, right? And there are so many queer and trans folks out here who can do that work or are interested in doing that work beyond Laverne and Angelica and the rest of the women on *Pose*, etc. What can we do to make sure that all those other talents in our community also have a seat at the table and an opportunity to tell a story?

**Tuck:** The way we always end the show is by asking, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Tre’vell:** It would look like a pot of okra soup. Now, I know you don’t know what okra soup is so I’ll explain it. Okra soup is a cousin of gumbo. Okra soup is my favorite meal. Shout out to Charleston, South Carolinians. They all know what I’m talking about. It is basically is this… There’s okra and tomato and there’s corn. I hope there’s no vegetarians listening. There’s some fatback and some neckbone and some pigtail if that’s your fancy. It’s hardy, it’s filling, it’s citrusy, whatever you need it to be. That’s my future of gender, whatever you need it to be that’s not oppressive and violent and, you know, all of those things.

**Tuck:** I love how many of your gender thoughts are stew based.

[laughter]

It’s a great thing about you.

[*Gender Reveal* closing theme plays]

**Tuck:** That’s going to do it for this week’s show. If you had a good time, please share the episode on social media and with members of your community.

You can find Tre’vell @TrevellAnderson and at TrevellAnderson.com. Their podcast Fanti is absolutely excellent. I listen all the time. I highly recommend listening and subscribing wherever you’re listening to this.

You can also find us on social media @GenderReveal and at genderpodcast.com where you can find transcripts of the show and our brand new FAQ. Check it out! Genderpodcast.com/faq. Our merch store is at bit.ly/gendermerch and you can support the work that we do at patreon.com/gender.

This episode was produced and edited by me, Tuck Woodstock. 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 next week with more feelings about gender.

[*Gender Reveal* theme ends]

**Tuck:** Do you have a fire in your chart? That’s an astrology question, if you’re into that.

**Tre’vell:** Oh, I’m not into it per so but I am a Leo.

**Tuck:** Okay. That’s so funny because I was like, if you’re not a fire sign, then astrology is fake but you are so great, perfect, wonderful. Love that.

[laughter