Tuck: The Bistitchual Podcast is brought to you by John and Kelsi, two crafty, queer Canadians. Tune in biweekly for real-life ramblings, zodiac quizzes, work-in-progress check-ins, and tips, tricks, and other fiber tidbits, along with the occasional crafty guest to discuss all things yarn-related. Hang out in the Bistitchual Discord server to make new queer fiber friends, show off your work, and pop into the bi-monthly stitch night. Find them on Instagram @bistitchualpodcast or at bistitchualpodcast.ca.

[Gender Reveal theme music plays]

Tuck: Welcome to Gender Reveal, a podcast where we hopefully get a little bit closer to understanding what the hell gender is. I’m your host and resident gender detective, Tuck Woodstock.

[Music ends]

Tuck: Hey everyone. Hope you’re all hanging in there. This week on the show we’re sharing my chat with Jackson King, a former baby trans Gender Reveal listener turned writer and hot trans about town. In this episode, Jackson and I talk about the UK’s trans health care crisis, anti-fatness in trans world, Drag Race ableism, and Evangelicalism as kink.

Jackson: And it’s just like, this intense guilt and shame and humiliation play.

Tuck: By the way, speaking of Drag Race, we recorded this a couple of months ago, so Jackson and I are still referencing the very trans Season 14, rather than the current season, All Stars 7. The good news for y’all who aren’t watching, All Stars 7 is also a majority trans season, and I feel quite confident that a trans person is going to win—not to *jinx* it, if you know what I mean. Anyway, before we get to all that, just a reminder that this is your last chance to shop our Pride merch collection, including the $5 misgendering shirt and stickers, the More Kink at Pride collection, and the I Don’t Know Any Straight People tank tops. That’s all available through the end of June at bit.ly/gendermerch. And as always, proceeds are split between trans artists and trans-focused organizations. Again, that’s bit.ly/gendermerch. And now, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender music plays]

Tuck: This week, instead of talking about something bad, like the governing body for aquatic sports, we’re gonna do what many listeners have been requesting for months and just share some good things that have happened in the lives of Gender Reveal listeners and other assorted trans people. Let’s start with the media section.

Alex says, “My book Gender Trauma won the Nautilus Gold Award for the Psychology category. I’m still not quite believing it.”

JJ says, “Trans nonbinary producer here. I just won a Tony for Strange Loop on Broadway.” Iconic!

Someone says, “My friend Jadzia Axelrod wrote a DC trans graphic novel called *Galaxy: The Prettiest Star*. It’s delightful and gorgeous and is getting great reviews.”

Someone else says, “Jesse James Keitel starred on *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* last week. She stole the show and tried to steal the ship. Fans loved it.”

Someone else says that Gender Reveal alum Vico Ortiz just got an Emmy nomination, which is huge.

And our friend Grace Freud says, “My first Marvel comic comes out tomorrow.” And editor’s note, it is called Marvel Voices Pride #1, I think. I saw two panels, it absolutely rules; I need to figure out how to get a copy *right* now.

Okay, moving on to the Transsexual Section of good things.

Number one: “I’m getting my second dose of T on Friday, and my binder from GC2B just arrived.”

Number two: “I managed to get off itchy estrogen patches and switch to an injection just before Minneapolis hit 90- and 100-degree days. I didn’t even have any insurance or pharmacy problems. Like I wasn’t even called sir by the pharmacy tech! Plus, now I get to say I’m shooting up girl juice.”

Number three: “Ya boi got their top surgery date for July 18. Feeling pretty joyful.”

Number four: “Surgery date is September 27. Plus, I’m loving that it’s a slight fuck-you to my transphobic-ass state who’s paying for it through Medicaid.”

Number five: “I had my first gender-affirming surgery last week. Happy Pride to my Adam’s apple that is no more!”

Number six: “I made it through top surgery. I’m home and resting. The cliché part is I cried happy tears in the recovery area once the nausea was under control.”

And here’s our final Miscellaneous Section. Thank you, by the way, to everyone who submitted trans joy for us, either via Twitter or the new Trans Story section of the Gender Reveal slack. Sorry we couldn’t fit in everyone, but we’ll do this again soon. Okay, with that said, four more.

Number one: “My youngest brother came out as trans, so now there are *two* wildly queer people in my immediate family.”

Number two: “I moved out of my parents’ house, and I don’t get misgendered daily anymore.”

Number three: “I went to my first music festival as Maya this weekend. It was such good vibes and concurrent to Pride weekend, it showed me that Pride isn’t once a year, it’s every day and everywhere you go if you allow yourself to let it.”

And then finally, “I recently got to give a bunch of trans kids a tour of the urban farm I work for. At one point one of them asked me what my favorite vegetable was. I told them kale, and they all started laughing at me like I was the most boring adult they had ever met.”

This has been, This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender music plays]

Tuck: We’ve got a Theymail message for you this week. Theymails are tiny messages from listeners, and this one is from our friend Jery Che, and it truly is incredible art. It says, “Beep boop, are you robot—I mean, trans and/or nonbinary? Come to Seattle Trans Picnic, Saturday, July 16, 12-6pm. We have many free vegan trans donuts, vegan queer tamales, vegan fluffy *ozakupans*, and so much free oil—I mean, human beverages. Fun, color-coded name tag system and a T4T area to make new friends with minimal awkwardness. That’s seattletranspicnic.com, bzzz bzzz. [electronic robot noises]

I also want to tell you about another podcast I think you’ll enjoy. That’s LGBTQ&A, which is hosted by Jeffrey Masters. And as you may have heard, it has a new LGBTQ Elder series that features conversations with the oldest members of our community. This includes people like Barbara Satin, an 87-year-old trans woman who talks about how the trans experience today compares to it 50 years ago. There’s also an interview with me, if you’re looking for a good episode to start with—not in the Elder series, just in LGBTQ&A generally. You can subscribe and listen to these interviews on LGBTQ&A. That’s LGBTQ&A with an ampersand.

[Gender Reveal music plays]

Tuck: Jackson King is a fat, black, bisexual trans man trying to survive TERF island. He is a writer and journalist interested in covering stories around fatness, blackness, queerness, and kink. And an aspiring leather daddy who will run your local community dungeon after the revolution. And finally, a Drag Race gay.

[Gender Reveal music ends]

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

Jackson: Oh my goodness. I mean, I want to say the basic answer is trans man. But, is that enough? Is that rich enough? I think it’s more for me like transfag.

Tuck: Mhmm, yes.

Jackson: I think that’s sort of speaking to me. Yeah, so I’m a trans man but, I’m more than that. There’s layers. I contain multitudes and all of that, you know.

Tuck: Mm. Well, maybe we’ll get into it.

Jackson: [Laughs] We will.

Tuck: Well, you were interviewed in the *Belly of the Beast* book by Da’Shaun Harrison, who was also on Gender Reveal, one of my all-time favorite episodes. And in the book you said, “In a way, perhaps I have my fatness to thank for helping me transition.” And I was wondering if you could talk about that.

Jackson: Oh my goodness. That’s really taking it to the early days. A time pre-pandemic, which feels so, so foggy in my mind. But I guess, there’s a way that like fatness and gender, or how you’re gendered, relate to each other. And many people have written about this and written about it in interesting and eloquent ways. But I think that for me, having traversed a sort of like butch, masculine woman because you’re sort of larger and that kind of thing, perhaps it didn’t feel like a huge shift.

I think about what it means to be a fat, black trans man quite a bit in terms of how that can be quite hyper-masculinizing. You know, you’re the big, scary black guy. Like, that’s what that kind of communicates. And that’s something that I sort of think about and wrestle with a lot. Because there is a way in which I can feel sort of safe or protected by it, because people keep their distance. But by the same token, there’s also knowing that that’s the same reason why I might be more likely to be brutalized by police, or you know, all kinds of other things, so. There’s a lot in there.

Tuck: Yeah, I know that you have thought about masculinity a lot, in a really intentional way. And yeah, I don’t have a specific question, but just how, what has grappling with that looked like for you? And sort of, what have you come to when you’ve thought about what you want masculinity to look like for you?

Jackson: Maybe the most surprising thing that’s been happening for me around masculinity is kind of *enjoying* some of the basicness of masculinity, or of practices between men. I feel like we often, like, mock the way that men form community and connections with each other and that sort of stuff, and kind of view it as not as emotionally mature or sort of neanderthal or something like that. But my little sort of like gay rugby era gave me a lot to think about. ’Cause actually, sometimes it’s just nice to be like kind of physical with your friends. And is that the testosterone talking, who knows? Is it like, some profound internal essence within my soul that’s masculine, who knows? But I think it’s been interesting for me to be like, “Oh you know what? Men are kind of…all right!” Maybe they communicate and connect in ways that are different from what we’re familiar with between women, but does it make it necessarily any worse or less important?

Tuck: Yeah, I mean I think it’s funny even just the way that you frame that to be like, “Oh, isn’t it so interesting how maybe men aren’t entirely bad?” [Jackson laughs] And it’s just like, how many men, how many trans men, are like, “Is it okay for me to say that I like some parts of being a man, as a man?” And it’s like, we’re all looking for permission for that to be okay.

Jackson: Yeah, oh my god.

Tuck: And it’s like, I think that’s kind of the point of transitioning, I have to say, is like... it would be troubling if you transitioned and you were like, “I hate every part of being a man and I hate all men,” you know? Like that’s *more* complicated. I think that’s okay.

Jackson: [Laughs] That’s not the aim really, is it? Yeah, you’re so right. It is interesting that that was even sort of like, “Oh, it’s surprising that I could enjoy being a man,” as someone who transitioned to be a man. But yeah, I guess that is sort of indicative of where the discourse is at, obviously, because patriarchy is real and violent and harms so many people. I guess for me, I think, there can be obviously a very simplistic response of just refusing to engage with the idea that men could be redeemable or sort of worth investing in, which I completely understand from people who’ve been harmed by men. It’s not an emotional position or a reaction that I judge. But I guess I’ve been thinking a lot about how actually for things to move forward, there are conversations that need to happen about how boys are raised, and like how they’re shaped, and what kind of happens between that sort of boyhood to adulthood moment of all of their emotional vivacity being sort of like crushed out of them as they’re sort of formed into what a man should be and that kind of stuff. I guess at the moment it feels a bit sort of like, disposable kind of like politics. Again, which I totally get.

Tuck: Yeah. Well, I think there can be a difference between like, “Men can be redeemed, and...” I was gonna say reformed, men can be reformed is such as weird thing, but sure, “Men can be reformed,” versus like, “And women have to be the ones to do all the work.” Because I think that’s like where it really gets sticky.

Jackson: Yes, yes.

Tuck: It’s like, we’re not, like no one’s saying like women have to do anything about it. [Laughs] Like, someone should.

Jackson: Yeah, yeah. No I agree, I completely agree. Yeah. Absolutely.

Tuck: So, you said that you went to Europe’s biggest gay sauna, so I was like, speaking of being scared of men, tell us about that. [Both laugh]

Jackson: Oh my god. Okay, so, I kind of went to Berlin as what I was terming it as sort of a sex pilgrimage. It was a time for investment in that part of myself. So, while I was there I wanted to get involved in the local scene, see what was going on, found out that they have Europe’s biggest gay sauna, and decided to pop along. I don’t know how familiar our listeners are with what happens in a gay sauna. But what you think happens, happens. [Puts on midcentury American accent] And a *lot* of it. [Both laugh] So, you go in, you get changed, you get your little towel. Some saunas have different rules about whether you sort of have to kind of be completely naked, or whether you can sort of wear some Speedos and something like that, which is what I opted for, being a man of the transsexual persuasion.

So I was kind of sauntering around in my Speedos and packer, and taking in the views. It was quite something to be surrounded by that many penises, to be frank. And just sort of as you walk around, just the sound of like, cheeks clapping. [Both laugh] And actually, I rang the sauna up beforehand to sort of find out what their policy was, whether they were trans inclusive, whether it would be okay for me to sort of wear underwear, that kind of thing. Because I was nervous about it. And it was the first time I’d been to a gay sauna, so I really went in at the deep end. [Laughs] And I stayed there for six hours.

Tuck: Wooow!

Jackson: Yeah. So, I was immersed, let’s say that.

Tuck: Hah, well I’m curious, you know, in general I know you’ve been plunging into the gay guy cruising spaces, and that can be extremely intimidating for trans people. So I was just wondering, since you’ve been exploring this—are you telling people that you’re trans, are you thinking about people knowing that you’re trans, or are you just trying to like saunter your way through not engaging with it at all? Like how is that part of it navigated?

Jackson: I guess it really just depends, you know. I think for me, I haven’t been wanting to do kinds of play where I would out myself in that situation. It’s not that I’ve been hiding that I’m trans, but I just don’t feel the need to disclose, per se. Like, clearly if there’s a connection or you’re into me, then you’re into me, and like, there are things that can be done. [Laughs] I do wonder what would happen, what would’ve happened had I kind of gone full commando in the gay sauna. You know, obviously that would have put some people off, but then other people might have then been open to it and you know it doesn’t necessarily mean that gay guys aren’t going to be into it. I guess it’s, yeah, it’s tricky to navigate, isn’t it?

Tuck: Mmhm. Yeah, absolutely. Well, I have more questions sort of about you, I’m sure, but I want to zoom all the way out, and unfortunately tokenize you as a person of UK experience. Because so often there’ll be like, UK news that we could pick up for news segments, and I’m like, I don’t know what the hell’s going on there. I need to get someone who lives there, and even if you’re not like a subject matter expert, and maybe you are, at least you’re unfortunately forced to know what’s going on, the same way that I’m forced to know what’s going on here. So, uh, it seems bad. But what the hell’s happening? I have no idea to what extent anyone is allowed to be trans or not, or allowed to convert people in or out of being trans, or not… [Jackson laughs]

Jackson: Okay, so, we have had conversations around conversion therapy in the UK, and the government was meant to be pushing forward this sort of banning all conversation therapy, but then sort of last minute backtracked, decided that the trans question was still sort of up in the air based on, uh, I guess a very sort of relentless media campaign. In particular, newspapers and publications in the UK that have been sort of virulently anti-trans, and sort of creating all sorts of like, trans panic. So, the mood in the U.K. has definitely shifted to one where people are kind of giving a lot of TERF ideology a lot of space and time to breathe and foster. There is another court case going on at the moment, from what I understand, which is based on, I believe someone who felt that they were discriminated against for holding transphobic views. Well, *they* wouldn’t say that they were transphobic views.

So, it just feels like every other week there’s a new court case, so it’s impossible to sort of keep up with it. And also, just like emotionally kind of impossible to keep going on with that barrage. But, in essence, things are bad. And they’re probably gonna get worse before they get better. And sort of while all this media circus is happening, we’ve also got like a huge trans healthcare crisis. So, basically, the sort of time between getting your referral to a gender clinic and having your first appointment is kind of stretching into beyond five years. Some calculations show that it could be over a decade, actually, based on the current rate.

Tuck: I hear y’all say gender clinic all the time, and I’m like, do we have those? And I guess we technically do, but like, it’s not an intrinsic part of accessing care. So, can you talk a little bit more about like, what that is, and are there alternatives? Or is the only option if you’re trans in the UK to wait five to ten years and go to something called a gender clinic?

Jackson: There are other options. So, either you have the kind of NHS healthcare pathway, which is yeah, the National Health Service, and where you can access free healthcare. Or you look at the private route. So first of all, with the NHS, as described, it’s quite lengthy; it can be quite difficult to even get a referral to a gender clinic, because it’s reliant on your local GP, and sort of whether they’re going to try to dissuade you from it, things like that. And then, yeah, there’s a long period of time between referral and initial appointment, and then it can take up to two appointments to actually get given hormones. Normally appointments are sort of years apart, or a year apart.

Tuck: Oh my god.

Jackson: Yeah, it’s pretty… so let alone thinking about top surgery, that kind of thing. So, things are in a bad way for those who need free healthcare, who can’t look at the private route. Things are in a very bad way for a lot of people. And then you kind of have the private healthcare route where the waiting time is kind of, from what I understand, I don’t think you would be waiting longer than a year, in terms of private healthcare, to sort of get onto hormones, or even get a referral for surgery and get an operation. So it’s a much more expedited, quick process. Hence why most people crowdfund for it. But the people, the practitioners that do the private healthcare often do the free healthcare as well. So they’re sort of profiting off of this huge backlog of patients that the system has created.

Tuck: Yeah. So you’ve written really eloquently in the past about the way that even if fat trans people make it past everything that you’ve just said, and wait 100,000 years for care, they can still be turned away due to fatphobia and all these non-evidence-based standards that medical professionals have. Can you talk more about that for folks who might not have read your work or experienced it firsthand?

Jackson: Yeah, for sure. I mean it’s a really rough issue, because you see the way that it impacts people’s lives, you know? I’ve just spoken about the horror of thinking that you’ve got to wait for five to ten years to start hormones. For some fat people, it’s sort of the horror of, well, I’m never gonna have this surgery or be able to because I’m being asked to lose an amount of weight that I can’t for many different reasons, which could be related to disability or due to eating disorders, all kinds of different things. And I was very moved by the stories of the people I interviewed for a piece that I wrote on this, they really sat with me for a long time, because it was just a real illustration of the way that medical fatphobia is so harmful and perpetuates harm in all different kinds of directions. Obviously, there’s the sort of psychological harm of, you know, being denied life-changing, life-saving surgery. But also, you know, a lot of the people that I interviewed ended up developing eating disorders as a result of some of the restrictions, the BMI restrictions placed on surgeries in the UK. So, it’s quite harrowing, and I think it can be quite frustrating when you try to talk about fatphobia as not just “Ooh, fat people,” but a structure that really does impact people’s lives. It is really frustrating when they don’t get it, and they think, “Well this is sort of a non-issue, really.”

Tuck: Yeah. So, if you are someone who is running up against those obstacles, do you know if there’s any kind of advice that can help people navigate that, or is it just sort of a brick wall that you hit? Because I don’t want to pretend that we can all like, self-advocate our way out of systemic oppression, but I don’t know if there are ways that people have found to like, access these things.

Jackson: This is the million-dollar question, and I’m asking myself as I look at trying to get phalloplasty and knowing that the BMI restrictions for that are much more strict than for top surgery in the UK. You know, as to whether there’s anything you can do, I mean, depending on where you sit on the BMI range, there are some surgeons who are a little a bit more flexible than others that you can kind of seek out. But that’s not always possible for every kind of procedure, and the people that I spoke to for my interview *were* people that have hit a brick wall, and this just is their life. So it’s, I’m afraid it’s not the most kind of helpful answer, but you know, hopefully that’s the whole kind of point of trying to write about it and get people to think about it, is that at some point, you know, we won’t be using an outdated, inaccurate, unhelpful measurement to determine the lives and wellbeing of fat people.

Tuck: Yeah, in your research, did you find anyone’s explanation for why they have those limits in the first place? Like, I’m not saying like do you think they make sense and should exist, because we can agree that they don’t, but do they have any sort of like internal logic or justification for it?

Jackson: The things that I’ve heard people say have tended to be around, it’s too dangerous to operate on someone like this because of the risk of death, or the surgeon won’t be happy with the results that you can get with the amount of fat that you have on your body. So, it’s a load of bullshit, basically. [Laughs]

Tuck: Yeah, I’m like, [fake cheery voice] “Cool seems good!” Ugh. Well, speaking of results, I was talking to a couple friends of the show about how it’s hard to find any examples of, for example, top surgery results of people who aren’t white. And that’s also true—I’m sure, I haven’t personally looked because of thin privilege—but I’m sure it’s also hard to find examples of folks that like aren’t very thin in results, unless you’re just like, looking at your friends. And then on top of that, you know, you have to also add in the layer that it’s got to be hard to find a surgeon who will do work with you or who you trust to treat you like a human being. But I’m just curious even on this level of looking for surgeons who could point to other people who looked sort of like you, and been like yes, this is what the result could look like, is that something you ran into? Because you have top surgery, right?

Jackson: Yes, yeah, yeah, I had top surgery a few years ago. And yeah, it was very difficult to find people with a similar body to me, to even imagine what my chest could look like, or to even sort of ask my surgeon for what I would want, sort of not knowing what was possible. So, I just searched around hungrily on the internet for sort of fat, fat transmascs, or sort of larger transmascs, who’d had top surgery and were sharing their pictures, and kind of managed to find a couple of examples, but that was really it. It was just an active sort of trust that this was what I needed and that the results would be, you know, good enough.

Tuck: Mmhm. I know you said in the past you did a lot of work around like body positivity, body acceptance, like pre-realizing-you-were-trans. And I always think it’s worth coming back to the difficulty maybe of being able to like, asses your own gender dysphoria and take steps to transition, and also not completely lose like the self-work you’ve done in that area. So I was wondering what it was like for you to sort of hold both of those things in your hand at the same time, and how you sort of felt out what felt right for you?

Jackson: I think in a lot of ways, the sort of interrogating body politics pre-transition really helped me through my transition. A lot of the things that I learned, I kind of applied as I was trying to sort of re-imagine myself as a guy and imagine the kind of guy that I could be, which was always gonna be a larger guy. But I did find that going from a sort of like, fat-positive woman kind of world to trying to be a fat-positive man was very different. I mean, I don’t want to make broad generalizations, but it feels like women talk about it more, more openly, and at least are talking about it more sort of online and in other bits of media than I’ve seen sort of men talking about it. And I think that was kind of tricky, was feeling a little bit lonelier, but then also going on a journey of trying to find a home in sort of like gay bear spaces, and I guess more sort of like fat-positive queer men’s spaces has been a huge part of translating the former to the current for me in terms of that issue.

Tuck: Yeah, I was gonna ask you about that. Because I know you’ve said in Da’Shaun’s book, like you said, “Every specifically transmasc space I’ve been in has embraced fatphobia, diet culture, and gym cultures as the norm.” And yeah, it’s so freaky deaky to me how much of transmasc culture and gay guy culture both are just sort of unquestioningly about like, taking your shirt off at the gym. I don’t want to get into the Elliot Page abs of it all, but, you know...

Jackson: Let’s not! [Laughs]

Tuck: Just gesturing at it, and then going in another direction! But I think it’s kind of embarrassing for us as a people, not Elliot, but just in general as a concept. And uh, yeah, I’m just curious as you were alluding to just now, like, what your vision of transmasc culture could be like, if we would like re-shape it a bit? Like what can we, do you think, move *towards,* and away from like, gym-bro-land?

Jackson: [Sighs] Wow. Well, I think the gym bro thing really is about really kind of leaning into that kind of hypermasculinity as a sort of gender affirming experience, I suppose. So I think beginning with what are our ideas or what do we think of as masculine or masculinity, I think it needs to start there. That conversation needs to happen before we even sort of look at thinking about behaviors. And I think a huge part of that conversation also needs to be about desirability politics as well, as like a broader umbrella issue under which, what kinds of masculinities are seen as desirable or valuable or worthwhile, is another kind of layer that has to be considered. Desirability politics, I guess, is the idea that there is this kind of libidinal economy of desire where things like whiteness, thinness, not having a disability, being cis, that kind of thing, are all things that are kind of construed as being attractive and desirable and valuable. And there are very real material impacts that it has for those people, and also people who are outside of that. And so I think if we could get transmascs to start thinking about where we’re placing our value, what we’re placing our value on, what we’re investing in, what we’re lifting up, what we’re throwing away, then I think that’s where the culture of fatphobia and diet culture and all that kind of stuff begins to die.

Tuck: Uh-huh. Well, here’s some big exciting news about you, you’re a Drag Race gay now. How did that happen? I mean, I got into Drag Race for trans season, but you were in before that, so what did you think of trans season compared to other seasons? I have no comparison.

Jackson: Oh my god, I loved trans season. Absolutely loved trans season. I think that there are more people to come out of the closest. I think it’s gonna be in the headlines a year or two years down the line... some estrogen prescriptions are pending. But for those that shared that journey with us, what a delight. And also, just kind of thinking about Ru Paul historically not being very good with, eh, the trans community, it does feel a little bit like poetic justice.

Tuck: Right, ’cause he’s not a gender detective, and so he thought he cast one trans woman, and he cast like six transfemmes.

Jackson: Literally!

Tuck: And I just, I just got to know what he’s thinking in his little brain. [Jackson laughs]

Jackson: Oh god, he’s gonna hire someone with like sort of like, yeah, detector, just like, “Come meet this person, I need to know whether they’re gonna derail my show with trans rights conversations.”

Tuck: Sign like an affidavit. It’s just like, “Absolutely I will not!” Ughhh. I just wanna, I just, maybe he’s changed. Maybe seeing all of these wonderful girls? And he’s gonna stop fracking, and it’s all fine.

Jackson: Yeah, absolutely. That’s what I tell myself to sleep at night, as a Drag Race gay. That definitely helps. Did you have a favorite of the season?

Tuck: Uh, yeah, Willow. It was absolutely terrible all season, they were like, “Willow, you, a person with a disability. It’s so inspiring the way that you never once have used your disability—that is terrible, and we hate it—as calling you a victim or expecting us to accommodate you in literally any single way whatsoever. You just pulled yourself up by your own bootstraps, and we *love* that about *you*.” Just like, every single thing you’re saying is so terrible, please stop.

Jackson: It was quite offensive, wasn’t it? And it just kept on going, I mean the awful episode where she couldn’t get into the boxes.

Tuck: Mhmm, yes! So to explain for people who haven’t seen it, like, she does have a disability, and part of her disability is that it’s really hard for her to be dexterous with her hands. And so there was a challenge where everyone had to like, tear boxes open and get items out to use to make some sort of costume, and she just couldn’t open the boxes. And her like sort of main ally at the time had gone home, for breaking her ankle, and so just no one helped her, and she had to just scavenge like a little rat around and like grab her little items. And it was terrible, and everyone was just like, “That’s how it is!”

Jackson: “That’s how it is!” I mean, she still turned it out, but again, it’s just like, my goodness, this show is, this show is terrible. I mean, it is terrible, I don’t make any excuses about that.

Tuck: No.

Jackson: I accept that. But what I really love about Willow is, not to make it about her disability again, but if you are someone who, you know, has a chronic illness or has a diagnosis that does make you sort of reckon with your own mortality and what value your life has, it can be a very dark place. And you know, what Willow’s managed to do with that, like how she brings that into her art and her drag, is just so phenomenal and really inspiring. So, I feel like the right person won.

Tuck: Also, for people who don’t watch it, at the finale, everyone made up a song to perform to, and her song was called, “I Hate People,” and it’s a banger, and it deserves and Oscar, a Grammy, an Emmy, a Tony....

Jackson: All of the awards. Give it all the accolades. As an introvert, I related profoundly to that.

Tuck: Is there anything else we haven’t talked about that you want to talk about today?

Jackson: I feel like a thing that I’m speed-running to at the moment, which has kind of taken me by surprise, is into kink. And like, not just doing it, but I think being open about it and communicative about it, and wanting to think and write about it publicly, actually, is something that I’m really into. So stay tuned for that. But I think queerness and kink, there’s obviously like so many historical connections there. Particularly around you know, sense of like community and care, and pushing against kind of conservativism and sort of harmful structures and things like that. So I’m finding it a very rich and fresh sort of queer wellspring.

Tuck: I’m just so excited for when we maybe move a little bit out of this era of like queer conservativism both inside and outside of queer community, because I think there are so many like rich conversations to be had there, and I’m glad that you’re not waiting to have them. But I do think it gets exhausting when like any mention of kink is, you know, automatically sort of inviting this certain level of discourse where you’re like no, this isn’t, I’m bored of that discourse, I’m not trying to do that. I’m trying to talk about something more fun.

Jackson: I knooow, I know. And I think what’s really frustrating is that people don’t know they’re just repeating old talking points. You know, these conversations happened many, many decades ago when people were saying the same things, and there is a historical precedent of people being locked up, not just for their sexualities, but for their sexual practices and what they do. And so I think a lot of people need to kill the cop in their heads when it comes to kink.

Tuck: Mhmm. Is that something that you had to do? Were you always kind of good with it, or did you have to kind of work into it?

Jackson: I mean, I grew up Evangelical. Like I had to... [Laughs] I had to kill that cop, bury him in the back garden, really process that shit. [Laughs] I was so profoundly repressed while so profoundly kinky at the same time. It was not a good place to be in.

Tuck: I mean, religion is a lot of kink, right? Like religion can be a kink, but also religion just is kink also.

Jackson: Truly. Truly. I think about so many of the practices that I was kind of indoctrinated into, and I’m like, this is so kinky. I tweeted the other day about the practice of... ooh, let’s use a fancy phrase, masturbatory abstinence, among certain Evangelical men. And how they have these like, accountability groups where they‘ve got to tell each other if like, you know, they’ve had a wank. Or they’ve kind of downloaded this, downloaded software onto their laptop, should they dare go onto a porn website, it’s gonna email someone within their group. And it’s just like, this intense guilt and shame and humiliation play. Because when you think about, okay, say you’ve sinned, you’ve had a little fiddle with the tool...

Tuck: Wait, is that a sin? Is masturbating a sin? Is that why they’re doing this? I don’t know anything.

Jackson: Yeah!

Tuck: Oh, I didn’t know that. [Jackson laughs] I thought it would be good, because it means you weren’t like doing adultery or something. Or like sex outside of, sex before marriage. You’re like, don’t have pre-marital sex, you can just jerk off instead. But they’re like also, don’t jerk off?

Jackson: No, no you shouldn’t jack off. Yeah.

Tuck: Sorry, I think I derailed like what you were saying, cause I was just like…

Jackson: No, no you didn’t, you were right to take a moment, and just take that in, you know. In a lot of Evangelicals circles, it’s frowned on. You should, you know, that’s not something that you should do. And so I think about these accountability groups where you know, if you do have a little one, not only do you have the guilt, the kind of transcendental guilt of having offended god, you now have to go and tell like three other guys, “I touched myself.” [Both laugh] And the level of guilt and humiliation play at work there is profound to me.

Tuck: Well, when you put it that way.... [Both laugh] That’s incredible.

Jackson: Yeah! Cause I think when people think about kink, they think it has to be overtly about sex, but like it’s not...

Tuck: It’s so often not.

Jackson: Yeah, it’s so often about playing with power, or playing with like really intense sensations or emotions. So it doesn’t have to be overtly sexual for it to be kind of kinky.

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

Jackson: Now this is a question I haven’t thought about much, to be honest.

Tuck: You had… you had years! Years to think about this. How long have you been listening to the podcast Gender Reveal?

Jackson: Redacted. Redacted years. [Both laugh] ’Cause I’m always like, “Oh that’s such an interesting... oh I’ve never thought of that!” But I think, do you know what, I’m gonna be like very contextual, very materialist with my answer. I want to talk about the future of UK gender.

Tuck: Perfect.

Jackson: And I want to talk about for me, the future is informed consent, lots of autonomy, easily accessible trans health care. That’s probably one of the biggest things that I would love to see in the future.

[Gender Reveal theme music plays]

Tuck: That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. If you had a good time, or learned something, please share this episode with your friends and community. You can find Jackson on Twitter and Instagram @itsjacksonbbz. We are @gendereveal and at genderpodcast.com where you can find transcripts of every episode of the show among all sorts of other resources. If you like what we do here at Gender Reveal, please consider supporting the show at patreon.com/gender. And by doing that you will automatically get access to our weekly newsletter and our monthly bonus podcast, among other perks. We’ve also got all sorts of good merch in the store through the end of the month, which means you’ve got like a week to look at it. So take a look at it before it’s gone. It’s at bit.ly/gendermerch.

This episode was produced and edited by Ozzy Linas Goodman and 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. Throw a brick at a cop.

[music ends]

Tuck: There has to be some sort of like, faggotry innate in the answer. Because like, *man*. [deeper voice] *Man*. Is like, hmmm….

Jackson: Yes, [deeper voice] *man*. [both laugh] Gotta put that bass in your voice.

Robot voice: Thank you for listening to this podcast about human genders and other illogical concepts ruminated on by sentient beings. The future of gender will be food for robots.