**Tuck:** Technically, New Year’s was yesterday, but if you’re still looking for a New Year’s resolution, consider resolving to make yourself less doxable online. I know it can feel really overwhelming, but a few small steps can make a huge difference, and one easy step is to sign up for a service like DeleteMe. DeleteMe makes it super easy to get all of your personal information taken down from hundreds of sites at once. All you have to do is sign up at joindeleteme.com. I use DeleteMe, and you can join me at joindeleteme.com, and use the promo code TUCK20 for 20 percent off your annual membership.

[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.

[Gender Revealtheme music continues, then ends]

**Tuck:** Hey, everyone. Hope you’re all hanging in there. I am genuinely really proud of all of us who’ve made it through another year, another holiday season, and are here to once again hang out together in this little trans corner of the Internet. And speaking of all hanging out together, actually, if you would like to hang out with a little trans corner of the Internet in real life, we have a live show coming up in less than a month at the Bell House in Brooklyn, New York. It’s on February 1, and we have four great guests who you know and love if you’ve listened to the show. Tickets are on sale now. Link in the show notes. Please come. In the meantime, this week on the show, I am really excited to share my interview with Alynda Segarra, who you may know as the musician Hurray for the Riff Raff. In this episode, Alynda and I talk about Emergent Strategy, Julian Casablancas, the Young Lords, climate change apocalypse music, being a train-hopping baby punk in goth riot grrrl drag…

**Alynda:** Okay, I want to look, like, fucking scary. That’s my gender.

**Tuck:** And navigating press tours as a queer, nonbinary, Puerto Rican musician…

**Alynda:** I did have a lot of talks about being like, “I refuse to become this spectacle again.”

**Tuck:** But first, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[Short tune with low, metallic chimes and hi-hats plays, then ends]

**Tuck:** So, this week on the show, I wanted to talk a bit about the news out of Scotland, and instead of me Googling and then repeating what I think Google says, I’m going to hand the reins over to Harry Josephine Giles. She lives in Scotland, and thus actually knows what she’s talking about. Here’s Josie.

[“Gallant Fantasie” by Blue Dot Sessions begins]

**Josie:** December 22 was a banner day for trans legal reform in Europe, with both the Scottish Parliament and the Spanish Congress passing bills to depathologize and simplify legal gender recognition. Both bills enable trans people to change legal gender by simple declaration from age 16, removing the need for medical diagnosis. The Spanish bill also has measures to ban conversion therapy and promote non-discrimination. While extending hearty congratulations to siblings in Spain, and wishing their bill all speed through the Spanish Senate, I want talk about how the reform came about in Scotland, my home. It’s been eight years since LGBTI organisations first started campaigning for the law, six years since the UK government first announced a review, five years since the first of three consultations on the law, it took three days of debate to pass, and I am now one thousand years old.

[Music fades out]

**Josie:** When we began this campaign, it was in the year of *that* Time Magazine cover. How things have changed! Looking back is like looking at a band of plucky adventurers setting out for a simple fetch-quest, when you know, they’re headed straight into the Caves of Despair.

[“Damaroon” by Blue Dot Sessions begins]

**Josie:** The steady escalation of moral panic and legal repression since then means that many trans Scots I know greeted this victory with nothing more than numbness. The victory has come with losses. Legal recognition for nonbinary people was chucked out early in the process, recognition for 16- and 17-year-olds is more restrictive, and there have been some concessions made to the moral panic, like making it a crime to “fraudulently” change your gender and giving police some powers to intervene around applications from people who have committed sexual offences. But it is a victory. The reform makes small steps to decrease the power of psychiatry and state surveillance in trans people’s lives.

We can also take a moment to appreciate the humiliation of our enemies. After hours of filibustering by the right-wing Conservative Party, the bill still passed, and when it did, one TERF in the public gallery lifted up her skirt to flash the audience with a giant pubic wig, and another shouted, “Quack, quack. I’m a duck trapped in a woman’s body. Quack, quack.” Opposition to this law has been the driving mission of TERFery in these islands, and winning reform in Scotland has left the hate campaign rudderless, for now. Finally, the law might have triggered a constitutional crisis. Leaders of the UK government in Westminster have done something they’ve never done before, and threatened to invoke an obscure bit of constitutional law, Section 35 of the Scotland Act, to prevent the new law from taking effect. Scotland is one of the devolved nations of the United Kingdom, along with Wales and so-called Northern Ireland: we have national control over some parts of the law and not others.

In the 25-year history of the Scottish Parliament, Section 35 has never been invoked, and even suggesting that Westminster might use it is political dynamite. Many people in Scotland who don’t particularly like the new reform are still furious with Westminster for infringing on Scottish democracy. I couldn’t have predicted the last eight years, so I don’t pretend to be able to predict the next. My guess, though, is that if Section 35 is invoked, it will actually strengthen the commitment to trans legal reform and bolster the cause of Scottish independence. If that’s true, maybe trans people will finally achieve what the Jacobites couldn’t, and finally destroy the imperial monstrosity that is the United Kingdom. That truly would be a victory. I’ve been your Edinburgh correspondent, Josie Giles, signing out.

[Music fades out]

**Tuck:** Josie Giles is a writer and performer. You can learn more about her work at harryjosephine.com. This has been, This Week in Gender.

[short tune with low, metallic chimes and hi-hats plays, then ends]

**Tuck:** We’ve got a Theymail message for you today. Theymails are tiny messages from listeners that we read on the show, and this message is from Jordan, and it says: “Fat Folks Tarot is making tarot queerer and fatter than ever. We’ve brought together 77 fat and talented artists to create a unique deck centering fat people. Don’t miss your last chance to scoop up this super queer, super trans, super fat tarot deck. Kickstarter opens January 1. Learn more at beacons.ai/fatfolkstarot.

[Upbeat electro-pop music plays]

**Tuck:** Alynda Mariposa Segarra is a Nuyorican singer-songwriter who performs under the moniker Hurray for the Riff Raff. Alynda was born and raised in the Bronx, and left home at 17 to ride freight trains around the United States. They are now rooted in New Orleans, where they learned to play music on the street. They have released seven full-length records and two EPs, and their latest album, Life on Earth*,* was released in February 2022.

[background music continues, then ends]

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

**Alynda:** I’ve been preparing for this question…. [Tuck laughs] Cause I knew it was coming, cause I have been listening to the podcast. Okay, I identify very much as an artist, songwriter, and then also, what came to me during the lockdown time of early pandemic is, a force of nature. But, you know, also nonbinary, I guess. [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** No, a force of nature is better.

**Alynda:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I mean, I know a lot of your gender journey, if you will, seems to have been sort of pandemic-focused, but you also wrote, for example, in “Pa’lante,” “Well lately, don’t understand what I am / Treated as a fool, not quite a woman or a man.” So how long do you feel like you’ve been leaving yourself, like, little gender clues?

**Alynda:** Yeah, you clocked it. [Both laugh] Um, you got your monocle on. Yeah, I mean, I definitely feel like what happened during my experience of lockdown in early pandemic days was finally getting a break, obviously, from me having to perform. I’d been performing and, like, just, like, hustling on the road for so long and trying to, like, reach a certain financial stability or just, like, housing stability or something, you know, and finally being out of that and not being forced to constantly be like, “Go up on stage, and if you fuck it up, maybe you’ll ruin all of this.”

**Tuck:** Aww.

**Alynda:** That’s like, the voice that was in my head. Suddenly, I was able to give myself, like, some grace and to allow myself to blow up all these rules that I had in my head of, like, presenting a certain way, trying to, like, be a girl, because I was just like, “I don’t know; is this what you want? I guess I’ll, like, do this, and I’ll, like, wear this blouse? I don’t know.” [Laughs] You know? Like, so I just allowed myself this time to free myself, I guess, from those constraints, and I feel like if I was, you know, seven years old and I knew what non-binary was, or I knew that there was some kind of, like, place that we could live in-between these two options, then I would have definitely chose it. I feel like this has been my whole life and it was just out of, like, desperation that I was like, “Okay, I guess I’ll do this. This is what I think they like.” [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** Yeah. I was thinking, so, in, in every bio of you that anyone ever writes, they always bring up that you did a lot of, like, train hopping and squatting in your, in your late teens, and you’re somehow, like, the third person from this particular cohort of people—whether or not you knew each other, you’re all kind of doing it at the same time—uh, that we’ve interviewed on the podcast, and so I was just trying to figure out, like, do you feel like a lot of the train-hopping punks turned out to be queer and trans, or is it just that I have selection bias and I’m meeting every trans one?

**Alynda:** [Laughs] No, I think we just all were. We—like, you know, I was really lucky, though, that I started my band with, like, a legendary trans train hopper, Yosi Perlstein. He played fiddle with me for a long time and, like, was such a huge part of creating my band. So I was really lucky to already know him and to ride trains with him and to know that, like, there was this world of, like, train-riding trans people and queer people, but I guess it just took some of us a little bit longer to see it in ourselves or something. I mean, for me, I definitely—like, something that happened during early pandemic days was I was like, “Maybe I’m—it’s not that I’m just a huge *fan* of trans people.” [Both laugh] You know? Like, “I’m your biggest fan!” And all of a sudden, it’s like, “Maybe there’s something else going on there,” you know?

And, yeah, I mean, I also think that for me, especially being thrown into having a platform, I was just so worried about, like, taking up too much space, and, like, becoming a spokesperson, or just, like, all of these weird things that happened that I was, like, just very nervous about, you know? Um, I think and now it’s taken at least me to this point to be, you know, feel comfortable enough with myself and comfortable enough with, like, my role, and knowing how to opt out of, of stuff like that, and being like, “I’m no spokesperson; I don’t want to do that.” Early on, I think it’s really scary and you don’t know what to do.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I mean, I want to say that is really smart that you were aware of that from the get-go, because that does happen and we do talk all the time about how if you have any sort of, like, public-facing-ness, you do automatically become a spokesperson for transgenderism, like, the second that you come out, which is when you don’t know anything, right? [Laughs]

**Alynda:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** So, like, it can be this huge problem, and I was wondering how you’ve handled that because, you know, your most recent album came out last February and you did some press around it, and I actually noticed when I was reading the articles that I was given by my producer Ozzy, who could have just done this on purpose, but, all the articles that I saw were, like, incredibly chill and were just using they/them pronouns for you, and did not do a gender spectacle.

**Alynda:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** And I was wondering if it was actually that chill behind the scenes, or if that was, like, a very intentional thing where it was like, “This is what we’re gonna do and this is what we’re not gonna do.”

**Alynda:** It was nerve-wracking, and then it was really chill. It was really surprising, especially for me because I have, like, a bit of wounds around becoming a spectacle, like you said, of, like, every bio about me is about this incredibly important time in my life, that, like, I’m now writing about more, which is, like, running away and riding trains, but it was always written about in this, like, spectacle way, that was just, like, “Well, you’re kind of making it sound like this, like, fun little romp. This was, like, me eating out of the garbage, but okay.” It also was—I don’t know, all these confusing things. So I had, I, I did have a lot of talks about being like, “I refuse to become this spectacle again.” But then at the same time, like, I don’t really have that much control over it; it’s what these journalists do with it. So I guess, like, my publicist did a good job, and I found a lot of these journalists who were writing about this album also had been following me for a couple of years. I mean, I will say, Ann Power specifically was just so, like, respectful, and so, it was just such a non-issue and it was, it really surprised me. I mean, not with her specifically, just in the industry, I was really surprised. And, you know, I definitely think that I have, obviously, like, I have a lot of privilege, too, because I think people are, like, still see me as a girl, and they’re just gonna—they’re, it feels like there’s still some, like, “Eh, whatever, okay. Like, whatever you say,” like, dismissiveness, that I’m just like, “Fuck, I’ll take it, bro, whatever,” you know? Like…

**Tuck:** Is that a, is that a priv—is it a privilege that you’re being dismissed because you’re being seen as a woman?” [Laughs]

**Alynda:** [Sighs] That’s a great, that’s a great question. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** Circle the privilege in that situation.

**Alynda:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I guess, like, it’s something, you know? I think that’s my go-to, is just be like, “Well, I have it easier than other people.” But yeah, that’s a really good point. If somebody else told me that story, I’d be like, “Fuck them.” So. [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** Yeah.Well, I am glad it has been mostly chill, and speaking of Ann Powers, I actually have Ann-Powers-related questions for you, so I will ask them now!

**Alynda:** Oh!

**Tuck:** Uh, the first one is that in an interview with Ann Powers *nine years ago* …

**Alynda:** Oh my god.

**Tuck:** … Ann said, “You’re such a politically-minded person, but this isn’t a time when overt ideologies express themselves much within popular music,” and you were like, “I feel really lonely; there’s not much out there right now.” So, it’s, it’s almost ten years later. Your music is still very overtly political. Do you still feel as lonely doing it? Or has the landscape changed?

**Alynda:** The landscape has definitely changed. There are times when I still feel lonely, when it comes to intention. I feel untrusting of some of the political, like, music that comes out or political statements that come out from celebrities, I guess, I feel a little bit of, like, “Are you just taking this as, like, you know, a media thing for you, or publicity for you?” But, I will say, like, the music scene is just so much queerer and there are just so many more trans musicians on the road, which has just been all I ever wanted. And that is something that I’m just so much happier. When I look back on that time period when I first got signed and was touring and stuff and making music, I mean, it was just, like, not very fun, and now I can say that I’m, like, there’s so many amazing artists out here that I would, like, love to tour with or I just want to go see or I just, like, can’t wait to hear their album, and that feels really powerful. So it’s both, you know?

**Tuck:** Yeah. Well, I mean, speaking of touring, so, you obviously, you took a break from touring, you transed your gender a little bit, you’re back on the road again. So, how has it felt—we talked about press, but how has it felt being back on the road, back touring, since the pandemic?

**Alynda:** At first it was really hard. It was so hard, because I got, um, better at taking care of my body. And also, something that happened for me being forced to stay still and stay in New Orleans was I started to *feel* my body again, which, I was like, “Woah! Haven’t felt this in over a decade!” [Both laugh] You know? Like, I’d been dissociative, kind of, this whole time. So it felt good to have a release again. And it also felt really scary, because I was like, I felt more tender and just more vulnerable, and, you know, before touring, like, when Trump first got elected, and deciding to, like—I mean, what I say is, like, outing myself as Puerto Rican and being like, “Hey! You thought I was this, like, Americana folk-singing girl, but actually, like, here’s all this Puerto Rican revolutionary shit.” That was so terrifying, and that was, like, felt confrontational and, and just, like, unsafe. So, compared to all that, I was like, “Wow, this is people who kind of, they know what they’re getting into, are coming to the shows,” and I just felt the love so much that it made it a lot easier. It was scary at first.

And now I’m done until next year, which feels amazing. [Laughs] Well, ’til next spring, I should say; next spring. But I will say that going back out on the road, something that was really interesting for me was, how do I present myself and how do I actually want to dress? And that was something I really struggled with. You know, I feel like, growing up, I, I became a punk really quick, at, like, 14, 13. And, like, really went into, like, goth, or, like, riot grrrl kind of, like, drag, and that felt just so safe for me, and really, like, “Okay, I want to look, like, fucking scary. That’s my gender.” [Laughs] Right? You know, as, like, a little kid, and then, eventually having to, like, get out of, like, being a crusty punk, I was just, like, “What do I do? How do I dress? What do I do with this body?” Um, so this was my first time really being intentional about who I want to be on stage and what feels good and what, like, silhouettes look good and sometimes, like, there were tears and sometimes I was just like, I, like, saw a picture of Julian Casablancas, and I was just like, “Wait! No, that’s me!” [Both laugh] Like, “There I am! Oh, I just have to, like—oh, okay, I can do that!” You know? So thanks, Julian. Just, like, seeing that costume or, like, that look, I was like, “Oh wait, now I know which way to go,” you know? So that was, um, it was really fun to finally be able to explore it, and it was also confusing. It was, like, all the things, but it felt really intentional, and it felt a lot better.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Well, one outfit that I keep thinking about is what you’re wearing on the cover of your latest album…

**Alynda:** Oh, yeah!

**Tuck:** … that, like, keys outfit. Can you talk about that? Like, what is that? Where did that come from?

**Alynda:** Okay, so that is by a designer called Kelsey Randall, and she loaned it to me for the shoot, and then the shorts, that’s like, its own—it’s like a bikini, so I was like, “I’m not doing that.” [Tuck laughs] But, uh, the shorts are this, um, brand called Busted Brand that I’m really obsessed with. It’s all latex and it’s just, like, so beautiful. And me and the photographer Akasha, we just really, we were trying to create this, like, you know, talk about, like, force of nature. Like, how do we create this, like, you know, use the landscape of, like, Pontchartrain, and use this, like, recycled material, this, like, material that would be discarded, and it just felt like the perfect—like, it was the key that we needed, you know? Like, of course this character or whatever I’m taking on as a role for this record would take the discarded stuff, and use it, and repurpose it, because so much about this record is about, like, walking into the apocalypse knowingly and being like, “Okay, now what do we do? And how do we keep living and how do we keep building, while not denying that the earth is being destroyed and that people are trying to destroy *us*, too?” You know? So it felt like the perfect, you know, like, Ziggy Stardust moment. It felt so, like, “This is what my role, or my character, would wear.”

And it was really funny shooting it, because we had planned this spot, we were so excited, it was in a public park. And then we come back the week where we, like, have our, like, little tiny crew of, like, makeup and hair, whatever, and, like, we get to the park, and there was this big blockbuster movie that had completely sectioned off this park that we were going to shoot at! We had to sneak past all of them, but I’m wearing, this fucking, like, heavy, jangly thing, wearing, like, drag makeup, and just, like, trying to be, just, like, incognito while people are all just obviously stopping what they’re doing and staring, being like, “What the fuck? Who are those people?” [Both laugh] So, like, these bros came over and tried to kick us out, and they came, like, three times, and then eventually, we were like, “Okay! We got what we needed!” But, I’ll always remember, like, jangling with that really loud thing, being like, “Nothing to see here!” [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** Incredible. Well, it’s interesting to hear you talk about, like, what your character or your persona for that album would wear, because your previous album, The Navigator, is, like, very clearly a concept album, and there’s a very clear named character. I guess we should talk about that, too, cause we haven’t. But, I’m interested in, like, what you see the character is in this new album, Life on Earth.

**Alynda:** I guess for this, it’s less of a character and more of, like, me stepping into a role. But I still feel like no matter what I do, there is a separation between, like, me at home, and me when I step out of the house, and try to accept my role as songwriter, as, you know, witness, as somebody who is gonna tell the truth, and for this, for this record, I had to prepare in a different way than The Navigator. You know, The Navigator was, like, “Okay, I’m gonna create this character to be able to say all the things that I want to say, because I think she’s stronger than me.” And then, this was me being like, “I think I’m ready to be this truth teller, and have it just be me, but I also still need, like, some armour,” you know? So there comes in, like, wearing certain clothes, or—like, I mean, cutting my hair was, like, a very big deal for me, too. Just like, I think that that really changed a lot for me internally, just kind of preparing for going, like, leaving my shell, you know?

**Tuck:** Yeah. Well, let’s back up a little bit and talk about The Navigator, too, because you were just saying that that character was there to say things that, you know, you felt that she could say better than you, and I was interested, cause I was reading a bunch of interviews that all say that The Navigatorwas created as this, like, quest to reclaim your Puerto Rican identity, and then there’s no details. And maybe everyone’s like, “Well, that’s just—it’s so obvious and self-evident,” but I would love to just hear you say, like, how The Navigatordid that. Like, what was your quest and, like, how did you achieve it with this record?

**Alynda:** So, when I first started writing The Navigator, I had left New Orleans. I decided to try living in Nashville. I’d recorded a couple of records in east Nashville and had some friends out there, and I was like, “I don’t know; I’ll give this a try.” At the time, it’s insane to say, it was cheap to live there [chuckles], which now it’s really not. I was, like, 26, and I had been here since I was, like, 17, so I was just like, “It’s time for me to try something new.” Going to Nashville right as the Trump presidency was gearing up was *so* fucking scary. And it was just me, and my best friend Willy, and we were just, like, feeling extremely isolated, and feeling like we couldn’t connect with a lot of people, and I just really went inward, and also at the time, like, the Puerto Rican debt crisis was starting to become more of front page news, and I had also at the time lost my last living grandparent, my grandmother on my father’s side, and that was a really big deal for my family. And I just started to feel this call of, “It’s time to state very clearly who I am, and it’s time to state very clearly who I align myself with, and who I’m in community with, and who I am here to fucking, like, back up when people are attacking them.” And I just felt like my career had gone in this really weird way, you know?

I started off just, like, in the DIY punk scene, and also playing in queer spaces. Like, I would play at this place Idapalooza, um, this land project called IDA in, in rural Tennessee, and then all of a sudden, I get signed, and I’m, like, pumped through this Americana music machine, with my first record on a label, Small Town Heroes. So, with Navigator, that was me really being like, “If I don’t take the reins right now, I’m gonna end up somewhere I don’t wanna be. And I’m gonna end up with people that I’m gonna curse out,” you know? [Laughs] Like, I gotta be very clear and intentional with my work and with how I present myself, so I just started to do a lot of research about, what does it mean to be a Nuyorican? Like, a Puerto Rican from New York. Like, what does our history even look like? What does it mean to be, like, a Nuyorican artist, or songwriter, or storyteller? And I really had to dig through history, and when I found history about the Young Lords, the revolutionary activist group that was started in Chicago – they were, like, based off the Black Panthers, but were mostly all, it was, like, primarily Puerto Rican people – when I found them, I was just like, “Oh! I make so much sense! Oh! Oh, duh!”

Because it was me looking, being like, “Why do people seem to think I don’t make sense?” I was getting interviewed all the time. People’d be like, “Wh—what, does a little Puerto Rican, like, how did you find Woody Guthrie? You know, stuff like that. It was very, like, quaint, and I was just like, “I saw Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?, and also, like, I went to the West Village,” you know? [Tuck laughs] Like, I’m a New Yorker? Of course I heard of Bob Dylan? Like, this is so crazy. So I needed to see myself in something, because growing up, my idea of being Puerto Rican was still West Side Story. I was so excited to see that movie as a kid. It was JLo, which, like, props to J.Lo and, like, Ricky Martin, but I didn’t see myself in them. That was basically it. So to find the Young Lords was a really big moment for me. And also this band called the Ghetto Brothers that originally started as a street gang, and then, like, became a band, and they really loved the Beatles; they’re so cool. You know, like, finding stuff like that, all of a sudden it was like, “Oh, I make perfect sense.” Like, and I’m not gonna let people tell me that I don’t anymore. So, making that album led me on that path, and it connected me with so many beautiful Puerto Rican weirdos, and it led me to playing in Puerto Rico eventually. And, and also, writing the song “Pa’lante” is, like, one of the most, just, like, satisfying moments of my life, was being—it took me, like, many years to write that song, and to even figure out what it was I was trying to say. And, being able to record that and to see how much it means to people, it just feels like, “Wow, I’m so grateful for this album to take me on this journey,” you know? Cause now it feels like I can just have that in me. I don’t have to, like, prove it or try to find it. I’m just like, anything I make is Puerto Rican shit, because I’m Puerto Rican, you know? Like, that’s how it is. So that, that was the journey. Also, Sylvia Rivera, hello!

**Tuck:** Oh, yeah!

**Alynda:** I give her a shoutout in “Pa’lante,” too.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Mhm-hmm. Well, speaking of influences, uh, you’ve talked about how your work is influenced also by adrienne maree brown, who I just have to assume that people listening to this podcast are familiar with, because they’re all gay! [Both laugh] So, do you wanna talk more about that and how those influences, like, show up in your work?

**Alynda:** Yeah. I’m really influenced by stuff that I read, and by film, and by thinkers. I just really love creating, like, a mood board when I’m gonna make an album, and just trying to find a way to be, like, “Okay, how can I take these big ideas and try to distill them into, you know, like, three minutes of time, and make a song?” And it takes a lot of time of listening to other people, listening to interviews, reading. And adrienne maree brown, reading Emergent Strategy really started my journey of making Life on Earth, and it was a companion to me at this time when I just didn’t have a lot of contact with other humans, because we were all isolated and New Orleans was very under threat, and it was really quiet, which was so weird for here. I was able, because of Emergent Strategy, to go out and walk around and find kinship and find, like, wisdom from these other lifeforms that I—you know, I grew up in the city, just been very human-focused, and I also struggled with feeling as I was growing up.

I grew up very working-class and it was, like, with my aunt and uncle in the Bronx, and I just kinda thought that nature was for rich people. I was just like, “Oh, that’s rich people shit.” You know? Like, rich people go camping, you know? [Laughs] Or something. It just wasn’t something that we did. And this reading Emergent Strategy, and also, actually, going to Puerto Rico, really taught me a lot about changing that idea, just breaking that down and seeing how untrue it is. When I was in Puerto Rico, I told a friend of mine that, who’s from there, and he was just, like, talking about how him and his friends, like, stand up to developers who are trying to take over public beach, you know? Being like, “This is our fucking beach. This, this beach belongs to everybody. Sorry, it’s not yours.” Yeah. So I really try to take in a lot of different inspirations, and turn them into, like, these little moments in time that we call songs. [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** Aww. “These little moments that we call songs.” Well, cute. Speaking of little moments that we call songs, here’s a little silly question in the middle. In “Pointed at the Sun” in your new album, you write, “Maybe there’s an answer. I’m a Pisces, not a Cancer.” Can you—what is the distinction being made here between Pisces and Cancers? [Laughs]

**Alynda:** This is a hot button topic. I’ve had a lot of Cancers come for me with their claws, being like, “What are you trying to say?” And all I’m saying is that Cancers have shells.

**Tuck:** Mmm-hmm.

**Alynda:** And by the way, Pisces and Cancers really get along. A lot my closest friends are Cancers.But sometimes I’m just, like, “I wish I had a—I’m trying to learn how to have a shell.” I’m just, like, so—I mean, also, that song is about just feeling like you’re just, like, too much for everybody. Like, I’m the friend that’s gonna call you crying, and just being like, “God, I just wish I could stop being so intense for like, one moment in my life!” [Both laugh] So that’s what I’m trying to say.

**Tuck:** In a much more recent Ann Powers interview, you said, “A major thing that I struggled with through making this record was not to disassociate as much as I’m used to dissociating,” which we talked about, and then you said, “I learned so much about being in my body from living here in New Orleans, a place that is a very big hotspot for climate change.” And I was wondering, is that one connected thought? Like, is the not disassociating and being in your body connected to climate change? And if so, how? Or were those two separate thoughts?

**Alynda:** Well, what, something that happened to me while I was making this record—or actually, it was after making the record, but it was along with the, like, album roll out planning and everything, was that Hurricane Ida hit. And I feel like I’ve gone through many, many summers in New Orleans where the threat of a storm is coming, but then, like, it isn’t as bad as we thought it was gonna be, and this one was really, really bad. It was really bad, especially for the rural areas in other parts of Louisiana, but it was also just so terrible because the entire city lost power for almost two weeks, you know? Like, the mayor was saying, “Please leave. We don’t have infrastructure to keep you. We, like, ran out of gas. We don’t have electricity. We don’t know what we’re gonna do, and we can’t really keep the pumps going.”

So, it’s times like that that you realize how much your body is affected by these crises, you know? Like, I’d been aware of how, “Oh, every summer I go into fight or flight mode super hard, prepared for possibly catastrophe.” And then this hits, and being that I was already on this journey of understanding what was happening in my body when I, like, slowed down and felt all the traumas of the past, it really just struck me. Like, wow, we’re living in this, and there are people that have been living in this and have also experienced Katrina, you know, and how can that *not* be connected to living in your body, you know? How can that not be connected to how your body stores these memories, and also stores the fear and stores the decision of, how are you gonna survive? How are you gonna respond? Are you gonna shut down and hide? Are you gonna try to run? Can you run? You know, it just opens up all of these questions of how we’re dealing with these really big issues that a lot of people, a lot of corporations are making a lot of money off of, you know? [Laughs] Like, so I couldn’t help but connect the two.

**Tuck:** This is the part of the show where I ask if there’s anything we haven’t talked about yet that you particularly want to talk about.

**Alynda:** Hmm. Um, I’m like, I already talked about punk. Lately, I’ve been talking about punk a lot, and how good it was for me. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** Talk about how good it was! I wanna hear it. I was curious, like, how that pivot also went from, you were saying earlier that you pivoted from the punk scene pretty immediately into, like, major label Americana, and I was just trying to imagine what that experience would be, because it sounds like absolute hell. [Laughs]

**Alynda:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** So, yeah, I was, I was curious about that, too, if you wanna talk about it.

**Alynda:** Yeah! I mean, that was a point in my life where I was so—I guess, growing up, if you were to ask me when I was, you know, 13, 14, “How do you identify?”, I would have been like, “I’m a punk. Like, that’s what I am.” And I think my heart got broken by punk. You know, just going through really shitty, abusive relationships, just feeling like I’d found community but also was still very toxic and very straight and very bro-y, and I, I felt like my heart was broken and I needed to get away from it, and I tried. I’m just like, “Maybe I’m this. I don’t know; maybe I’m a songwriter now. Maybe that’s what I gotta focus on.” And now I feel like I’m finally in a place of being able to join the two. I think I’ve healed up and I’ve also seen so much change, and also so much stay the same. [Both laugh] I think I’ve, I’ve healed, and I’ve been able to talk about, like, with interviews and stuff, when I first started getting interviewed, I really didn’t want to talk about train riding and being, like, a crusty punk, because I felt like it was really sacred.

**Tuck:** Mhm-hmm!

**Alynda:** And I didn’t want it to be exploited, and I also didn’t want to tell any secrets, and, so that was really important to me, was keeping it kind of on the DL, even though it was like, it became kind of boring, you know, the way that they were talking about it. Which I liked! I was like, “Keep it boring, cause I don’t want to talk about this.” And now I’m in more of a place of celebrating where I came from and how that was my education, and that was, like, I see that as my college years. Like, some people went to college, and I rode trains, and I learned a lot from it, and I learned how to play music from it.

**Tuck:** Yeah. It makes sense when you say this, though, because, if, you know, being punk, hopping trains, squatting, all of these things are inherently off-grid, inherently counterculture, and then, like, these ambassadors of the mainstream culture are like, “Hello, Alynda, will you tell us about whatever, whatever?” [Both laugh] It’s like, it’s obviously, it’s gonna feel weird to be like, “Yeah, I didn’t believe in…”—I mean, I’m not saying your particular answer, but I just mean, like, a lot of people are doing this because they don’t wanna be in—“the part of society that you are, like, inherently representing by doing this, like, by hosting this interview.” Anyway, that was a long rambly way to just be like, “I understand the instinct to be like, ‘This thing is mine and you can’t have it.’”

**Alynda:** Yeah! Yeah! And it’s, like, and there’s a language, and there’s references, and there’s, like, I want to keep that real. I don’t know; I think so much about, like, that word, like, “real,” you know? It just, it was a part of my life, that whole time that wasn’t digital. And I’m glad that I kept it somewhat sacred to me. And now, a lot of the work that I’m making and a lot of the songs that I’m writing are really going back to that, like, memory chest of all of those experiences and people that I still wonder about, and the people who really helped make me who I am now, I think so much about, um, this person, Ms. Jonathan, um, who I first met when I ran away in New Orleans, and she was trans and she was just, like, so fucking cool. And, and I had been stuck, it was before I even found, like, my hobo band. And I was just stuck with, like, the worst people. Like, truly trash people. [Laughs] You know? Like… And I found her, it was just, like, “Oh my God! Like, my people,” you know? And we, like, palled around, and, I just, someone like, I think about her, and I just wonder, like, “Where is Ms. Jonathan?” And, and I’m able to take that memory and turn it into a song, you know, and, and try to, like, that’s a lot of the work that I’m doing now, is, how do I honour these experiences and these people? Cause for so long I was just like, “That’s not for you.” And I’m like, “Well, what about it being for me *and* for people,” you know? Like, what about sharing it in a way that feels like we’re all sharing it, it’s not just being taken or something? So that’s a lot of the work that I’m doing now, the writing I’m doing.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I was thinking as you were saying that about how you’ve had somewhat distinct, you know, eras of your music, and then I was thinking about how you’ve changed your middle name a couple of times to sort of mark, uh, distinct eras, and I’m like, “Well, that’s very trans of you!” [Alynda laughs] Uh, do you feel like you’re still solidly in the Mariposa era, or…

**Alynda:** I do!

**Tuck:** … are we gonna—? Great; perfect.

**Alynda:** I do! I really like it. Yeah. And I’ve wondered, “Will I change it again?” But I don’t know; I just love, you know, this idea of a butterfly, and also, like, butterflies being attached to ideas of ancestors, and it feels very fitting, yeah. But I threw away “Lee.” I mean, that was, like, a very train hopping, like, we were spending so much time in the South, and I was like, “I want a southern name,” you know? People are like, “We’ll call you Alynda Lee.” And that feels like, when people call me Alynda Lee, I feel like I’m gonna throw up. It’s just, like, it feels so, like, whitewashed, too, you know? I remember my father being like, “What is up with this ‘Lee’ thing?” [Laughs]

**Tuck:** Mm, mmm-hmm.

**Alynda:** Like, “Where is Segarra?” And I, yeah, so it feels very, I don’t like it. But it, it still happens; it’s really wild.

**Tuck:** That’s so—who’s calling you that?

**Alynda:** People still, I’m like, “What Google page are you on?” [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** Like professionally? People think that’s your name?

**Alynda:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** That’s so wild.

**Alynda:** I know!

**Tuck:** I thought you meant, like, someone you, like, met 15 years ago or something.

**Alynda:** Oh no, no, no.

**Tuck:** That’s wild!

**Alynda:** No, like, still on the Instagram, and still, like, yeah, it’s really crazy.

**Tuck:** Wow. It’s not subtle; it’s, like, [laughs] very obvious what your name is, like, in your Instagram name, for example.

**Alynda:** I know! I know!

**Tuck:** Wow. Well, incredible that you did not change your name for trans reasons but are still getting deadnamed on the Internet, the ultimate trans experience. [Both laugh]

**Alynda:** For real!

**Tuck:** Congratulations, I’m so sorry.

**Alynda:** I mean, I will say that, I’m also, I really made a journey even from putting out the record. When I first put out the record, I was still very much being like, “‘She’ is okay.”

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Alynda:** “Like, you make a mistake, and it’s like, they/she, and you know, it’s like, I don’t want to make anyone feel bad.” I was just so, like, thank God I have a fucking therapist, you know? [Both laugh] But I was still so in that place, and now I’m, like, slowly, but surely, being like, “Just don’t. It’s okay. Like, just don’t call me ‘she.’ It’s, it’s really not that hard.” I’ve, I’ve learned so much about asking for what I want.

**Tuck:** Mmm-hmm.

**Alynda:** I got a lot from one of the episodes of your podcast…

**Tuck:** Oh!

**Alynda:** …of people calling in for advice, and it was you and I believe a therapist who were talking about, like, asking for what you want, and people will know once you tell them. And that’s been a really big journey for me that’s changing my life, to be able to be like, “Okay, I have to put it into words, and I have to own it, and I have to be okay with how I deserve this, because I think other people do. So why don’t I?” So that feels like it has become this gift for me to just be like, “Call me by ‘they/them.’ Like, just, it’s not that fucking hard.” That, so that journey is still going, and I, I hope that hearing that helps other people who are struggling with it, too.

**Tuck:** Oh, I’m sure it will, because I just feel like almost everyone does have to go through that arc. And, you know, some people, for example, changed their pronouns right away, but a lot of us do the, for example, she/her to she/they to they/she to they/them pipeline, and then some us of keep going, you know? Like, it’s, it’s a whole journey. I was talking to a friend of the show the other day who was like, “Oh, I’m using they/them pronouns now,” and I was like, “Oh, I thought you were doing that before,” and they were like, “Well, no, I was doing they/she because I didn’t want to have to confront people if they use ‘she,’” and I was like, “Well, I mean, the good news is you still don’t *have* to do that.” [Both laugh] You know? Like…

**Alynda:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Tuck:** There’s no law. [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** You can let them say whatever you want. Uh, but you can at least ask for what you want, right?

**Alynda:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** So… Well, the way we always end the show is by asking, “In your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?”

**Alynda:** For me, in an ideal world, the future of gender is that people are able to feel safe, and strong, in being able to identify however they identify, and change, and grow. You know, I think I’ve learned a lot about the idea of love, and loving someone is being with them through their changes, you know? And, like, allowing them to change. And I think adrienne maree brown taught me a lot about that fromEmergent Strategy and other writings. From this, like, Octavia Butler idea that change is god.

**Tuck:** Mmm-hmm.

**Alynda:** I think my ideal world would be a place where people felt safe to—and, and, like, strong, and joyful, and being in their bodies and being able to change, and to say, “You know what, actually? This is what’s going on now,” being able to express what’s going on inside their experience.

**Tuck:** Mmm-hmm.

**Alynda:** Yeah. And, for a lot of billionaires to disappear. [Tuck laughs] I’m serious. Like… [Laughs]

**Tuck:** Wow, that is a really good addendum. I’m glad you added that.

[Gender Revealtheme music begins]

**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 folks in your community. You can find Alynda on Instagram @hurrayfortheriffraff, at Twitter @hftrr, on TikTok @alyndamariposa, and at hurrayfortheriffraff.com. Also, don’t forget to check out their music. Uh, Life on Earth absolutely slaps; all their music slaps. Check it out. As always, you can find us on Twitter and Instagram @gendereveal and at genderpodcast.com, where you can find transcripts of every episode. You can also find us at patreon.com/gender, where we release a newsletter every week, and a bonus episode at least once a month, and you can also find us at our live show at the Bell House on February 1 in New York City. Today’s episode was produced and edited by Ozzy Llinas 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.

[Gender Revealtheme music ends]

**Tuck:** Or someone will be like, “Well, what does ‘gender detective’ mean? You keep saying ‘gender detective.’ Like, what does that mean?” And they want, like, a really serious answer. [Alynda laughs] I’m like, “Oh, it is a joke based on one skit from the first season of Portlandia.” And they’re just like, you know, they want, like, a really serious thing. I’m like, “No, I’m doing jokes.”

**Alynda:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** But also, if it was serious, I wouldn’t tell you, you know? [Both laugh] Because, like…

**Alynda:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Tuck:** … you wouldn’t understand!

[Tune with chimes plays]

**Alynda:** Yeah, I’ve really gotten so much from, um, also, listening to your, the advice and how so much of the advice would be, “You’re allowed to do whatever you want with your body.”

**Tuck:** Yeah. [Both laugh]

**Alynda:** Okay! [laughs] You know? Like… Um…

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Alynda:** That feels really good to hear.

**Tuck:** Good. Yeah, eventually, we’ll have to stop making advice episodes, because the advice is always the same, and it’s always just like, “Do what you want!” [Both laugh]

**Alynda:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** But, it’s gotten us so far.