[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 hangin’ in there. This week I am delighted to share another update from best friend of the show, Mckenzee Griffler. How many times do you think Mckenzee’s been on the show? Make a guess in your head…. It’s 17! This is her 17th appearance on Gender Reveal, so I am not going to explain who she is, but I will put in a plug for my very favorite Mckenzee episode, which is actually a Gender Conceal episode. It’s called “Unveiling the Gender Questions Hall of Fame,” where we did advice that was, like, too spicy for the general public, and you can find that exclusively at patreon.com/gender. But today, on this podcast, Mckenzee and I are breaking one of the biggest Gender Reveal guidelines and talking so much about transition. We start with a story about getting your gender from the Dunkin’ Donuts at the Denver Airport, and then we move on to speedrunning gender, fun voice training pranks, special girl bottom surgery…

**Mckenzee:** [voice clip] 95% of the time they’re just like, “I had no idea that was an option,” and that’s very exciting to me.

**Tuck:** …and wacky HRT side effects.

**Mckenzee:** [voice clip] I guess feeling things is pretty wacky if you’ve never felt things before. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** But most of all, what Mckenzee talks about in this episode is just being very happy. And while I don’t need to convince you that being trans is a gift and transitioning is good, it’s still just really nice to hear that someone out in the world is actually having a nice time. But first, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

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

**Tuck:** This week in gender—look, I don’t want to have, like, a fight about this, but I personally love seeing the success of “Unholy” that Sam Smith/Kim Petras collab song.

[Audio clip of Unholy plays then fades out]

**Kim and Sam:** [song clip] Mummy don’t know Daddy’s getting hot at the body shop, doing something unholy.

**Tuck:** I think it’s so funny that in the middle of an international trans panic, two trans musicians were like “We’re gonna drop a single about fucking your dad,” and everyone was like, “Sure, yeah, okay, whatever, who cares. We’re more concerned on whether children should be allowed to go to *any* *library*.” Of course, the tide has turned a little bit on this one, because a few days ago Sam and Kim performed Unholy at the Grammys, in a performance that many people complained was demonic, satanic—and to be fair, it did feature subtle themes like fire, the color red, hot women with leather and devil horns and big ole whips. Okay, so yeah, sure, satanic. This finally put Unholy in the crosshairs of right-wing pundits. Ted Cruz tweeted “This…is…evil.” Marjorie Taylor Greene said something about how, quote, “American Christians need to get to work,” but my favorite response is actually from the Church of Satan itself, via a TMZ article that I found. It says, quote, “the Church of Satan says Lil Nas X’s ‘Montero’ is much more in line with their philosophies.... In the music vid[eo], [Lil Nas X] descends into hell, murders Satan, and takes the devil’s crown for himself. As for Sam and Kim’s ‘Unholy’ song, the Church of Satan says it’s really just a lot of attractive people prancing around in nice outfits, singing lyrics more about infidelity than Satanism ... which is why Satanists are responding with a resounding ‘meh,’” unquote.

Anyway, I hope—like, I really, really hope that gay people continue to try to impress Satanists at the Grammys. And speaking of which, our friends at the Eating For Free podcast just started a four-part series. It’s called Pop Music that F\*cks: An Oral History of Outrage and that series actually uses the Unholy Grammy performance and the ensuing outrage as its starting point for the series, so if you’d like to hear more check out Eating For Free. But in the meantime… Okay, actually, this is like a total sidenote, but do you ever think about how Sam Smith is the most famous they/them in the world? Like, I know nothing about this person other than that their pronouns are they/them, and they made this one song with Kim, and they wore like a really big dress on SNL last month, and yet they’re so famous and they’re like halfway to an EGOT? Who are they? Sam Smith come on the show and introduce yourself challenge! Anyway, Sam and Kim actually won a Grammy for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance. And to wrap up this segment, we’re gonna listen to Kim’s acceptance speech for that award, because it’s nice, and it’s short, and it’s about trans people. Here she is.

[clip of Kim Petras’s acceptance speech at the 65th Annual Grammy Awards plays]

**Kim:** [voice clip] Oh my god, thank you so much! Crazy! Sam, I love you so much, and this song has been such an incredible, incredible journey for me, and Sam has been a supporter of mine for so long. Um, Sam graciously wanted me to accept this award because I’m the first transgender woman to win this award. [audience cheering] And, and I’m so—thank you. Um, and I just want to thank all the incredible transgender legends before me who kicked these doors open for me so I could be here tonight. Um, Sophie especially, my friend who passed away two years ago who told me this would happen and always believed in me. Um, thank you so much for your inspiration, Sophie. Um, I adore you and your inspiration will forever be in my music. Um, Madonna for fighting for LGBTQ rights, um, so much. [audience cheering] I don’t think I could be here without Madonna. Um, my mother. I grew up next to a highway in nowhere, Germany, and my mother believed me that I was a girl, and I wouldn’t be here with out her and her support. And everyone who believed in me to this point, I love you so much. This is a huge moment for me. Bye-bye! [audience cheers]

**Tuck:** This has been, This Week in Gender.

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

**Tuck:** We’ve got two Theymail messages for you today. Theymails are tiny messages from listeners, and the first one is from Kay, and it says: “Help a queer indie publisher print their next series. Sword & Kettle Press is crowdfunding a new cosmology series, a set of 11 handmade mini-books by marginalized authors. This series has everything: personal mythologies, fresh retellings, prose, poetry, beginnings of universes, and ends of worlds. Visit bit.ly/newcosmos to support.” The second message is from a person named Israel, and it says: “This June I will be biking from San Francisco to L.A. to raise funds for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and Los Angeles LGBT Center. Proceeds will be going to life-saving services in HIV and STD prevention, screenings, and care. To find out more, and to donate, go to giving.aidslifecycle.org/participant/izzy.” Link in the show notes.

[Upbeat electro-pop music plays]

**Tuck:** Mckenzee Griffler is a filmmaker, the executive director of the Open Sanctuary Project, the second most popular Mckenzee after a cute lady boot if you Google her name right, a long-time oversharer of on-podcast gender on this very gender podcast, and, once again, most importantly, a normal girl.

[background music continues, then ends]

**Tuck:** I feel like, legally, we have to ask you: in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Mckenzee:** Just “girl” at this point. The girl one. The F.

**Tuck:** Yeah, F for girl, famously. So yeah, tell us about your journey from where you were before, in the sort of agender-nonbinary-land, to normal-girl-hood.

**Mckenzee:** I think being a normal girl.... Actually, I think I’m gonna start this with a story, which was, back in 2019 I was travelling via the airport to visit my friend Tuck Woodstock, and I stopped at the Dunkin’ Donuts in the Denver Airport to get a dry bagel and an iced coffee, and the server called me ma’am not once, but two times, and my first instinct was “Haha, that is so fun. I got called ma’am. Very interesting, but I’m not a ma’am,” and then two weeks later I was still thinking about it, and then three years later I still think about it. [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** Okay, but the really important question here is: was this before Dunkin’ Donuts started doing avocado toast?

**Mckenzee:** So here’s the secret of the Denver Airport when you’re a vegan and everything’s closed: you get the dry bagel from the Dunkin’ Donuts or the Caribou Coffee, then you go to the KFC and you get hashbrowns and you smear the hashbrowns on the bagel with some ketchup and hot sauce, and then, baby, you’ve got a vegan—

**Tuck:** This is unhinged. [Laughs]

**Mckenzee:** ...you’ve got a vegan meal goin’ on. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** You just un-converted people to veganism.

**Mckenzee:** I’m so sorry, everyone.

**Tuck:** We’re like, “We thought there was, like, real food involved.” [Both laugh] Okay, anyways, so you got gendered correctly at the Denver Airport and now you’re a girl. I love that. Was there anything other than ordering a dry bagel at the Denver Airport that you particularly did or experienced to have this realization, or was it just like an over time situation?

**Mckenzee:** [Sighs] I think part of it was that my experience, for the longest time, was focused a lot more on what was wrong as opposed to what was right, and it was really easy to be like “Oh, this feels bad and weird, I don’t know why it feels bad and weird,” and the more that I did things that felt right, the closer I could conceptualize into my brain about, like, what it was that felt right versus what felt wrong. There was just kind of a tipping point. A transgender tipping point, if you will… [Both laugh] um, around 2020-ish, when I was like “You know, there’s a word for, like, really just wanting everything to go in this one category of being perceived in the world, and it’s a lot simpler than the words that you’ve been using before, and, like, why don’t you just use that word?” and then it still took me a year after that to actually start using that word, which is just boring, normal girl.

**Tuck:** It is so brave of you to invent being a girl, and on the cover of TIME magazine no less.

**Mckenzee:** Bravery just comes naturally to me, so, you know. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** I know that a lot of people write in to us and they’re like, “I really have to figure out my gender, and my pronouns, and my name, because once I change it once I can never change it again,” and I made an episode of Life Kit about changing your name where like half the program was just me being like “No, really, you can just keep changing things.” Like, it’s extremely fine to keep changing things, and I know we’ve said that on this podcast too. What was this latest round of sort of reformatting and changing everything in your life regarding gender compared to previous rounds of this?

**Mckenzee:** I would say it definitely gets a lot easier. Therapy also helped a lot, but the therapy wasn’t really about my gender, it was really more about, like, learning how to, like, give myself things that I want and not just being like, “I’m asking for too much from the world for basic respect.” There’s like a lot of different experiences that I think I went through in like the last year of, like, being comfortable just being a girl versus like a nonbinary person in the world. Cause like, for instance, it’s very different when you have like a societal-prescribed set of expectations of a gender versus, like, “Be nonbinary and you can be what you want to be and that is just you doing your gender,” versus “Well, this is how we expect you to do this gender.” So like, my dysphoria got like a lot more specific and pointed, and I don’t know if that was just because now I’m like trying to quote unquote “pass,” versus just like vibing and trying not to feel bad. But at the same time, the things that really bummed me out as a nonbinary person, like polite gendering in society by strangers, is like unfortunately like a real source of joy for me these days, and like, that’s something like that I think I’ve just had to sit with and be like, “Well, in an ideal world my future of gender would not include random strangers just, like, giving people gendered honorifics without knowing their gender,” but, paradoxically, when yesterday I was seeing my dad for his birthday and the server was like—you know, me and my fiancée—“Would you ladies like a table?” I was just like “Hell fuckin’ yeah! We would like a table, and I feel great about this.” So, I think that’s like a real... it’s a real trade-off for the whole living as a binary girl, versus a nonbinary person, in the world. But like, generally, I feel like this second run of gender has been such a speedrun for me, despite thinking way too much about gender for like the entire time we’ve known each other, and I think the reason why I think this one’s gonna stick, maybe, is because I’ve stopped thinking about gender. It’s just not something that comes, like, in my head, unlike the ways that it used to come up in my head like every day, where I’d be like, “Ever think about gender?” and now I’m just like, “No, I’m thinking about, like, making breakfast,” or something.

**Tuck:** Yeah, were you thinking about it the whole middle time? Like, have you been thinking about it since 2016 or before?

**Mckenzee:** I would say I was. I think I was thinking about it way too much, or maybe it was just the right amount because my brain was mad at me for not, like, expressing my gender the way that my brain wanted it to. There is so much, like, interrogation, and like this carousel of ideas where you just keep coming back to the same, like, circular thoughts about it, and like, “Oh, well this should make me happy but why can’t I just be this way?”, and like, “That’ll be fine, but like, if I try this....” I spent so long, like, interrogating every element of gender for so long. I was coming closer to a truth about myself, but like I didn’t quite get to it. And my brain, despite not being kind enough to just be like, “You’re a stupid girl!”, really just wanted me to figure it out eventually.

**Tuck:** Yeah, do you feel like you thought your way into it? Like, do you feel like those thought spirals got you somewhere, or was there like a secret other thing that you had to do in order to get to there? Because I think a lot of people’s instinct is to be like, “I have to think really, really hard about gender at all times and I’ll solve the magic code,” and I’m always just like, “There is no math equation,” but now I’m like, “Maybe there is?” Like, maybe you just had to do math for 6 years?

**Mckenzee:** Um, I think that’s just the way that my specific bad brain is. My brain just likes chewin’ on problems and hoping that they’ll be solved. But I don’t think it was the thinking about it that really did the solutionizing. I think it was, like, the taking tangible steps to like feel okay in my brain and my body that did it. Unfortunately, I feel like, for the first four or five years of identifying as trans, it took me a long time to trust that like the things I knew and advocated would work for other people would actually work for myself in terms of like resolving my bad-brain dysphoria. I’d be like, “Oh, yeah, you should definitely start HRT. You should definitely do these things, and like consider these things if they make you feel good, but it’s not going to work for me because I have, like, a special bad brain and it doesn’t work that way for me.” And then, like, shockingly every single thing worked and, like, really quieted my brain. I think that’s the real difference. It’s like, all of my gender thoughts have just been so quiet. It’s kind of magical, because my brain was never convinced that that was actually a possibility for me.

**Tuck:** Now that you are speedrunning gender, one of those things has been vocal training. We talked about vocal training on the podcast a few weeks ago, but I was curious what has been the most helpful or important thing for you, not just physically but like emotionally.

**Mckenzee:** I think the thing about voice training is like, so much of it is entirely your emotional processing of changing your voice, because obviously your voice is like a big part of how people, like, experience you in the world, and for me particularly as somebody who has examples of my voice at different points pre-voice-training and then like during voice training, such as like the last couple podcast episodes I was on, the most helpful thing was just telling every single person around me, up front, that would hear me more than like once a year, that I’m like, “I am gonna be doin’ stuff with my voice. It might sound completely different next week, it might sound really bad and weird right now, but I am working towards somethin’ new, and I need you to be cool about it.” Even saying that, it still took me like a couple, I would say months, before I like didn’t feel hyper-self-conscious using a modulated voice for a while. Even the podcast episodes we were on, I was just thinking way too much about my voice, like every single time I said a sentence, and then I would listen back to the episodes and be like “Oh, you’re doin’ a weird thing with you’re voice there,” and eventually I just don’t think about it anymore. It’s kind of that running theme. I really thought I was gonna think about it forever until I didn’t. And then you just kinda get used to it, and, you know, now I’m very happy with my voice, which is actually, again, a wild thought, because before going into voice training I was like “Well, I was not psyched on my voice, but there’s nothing I can do about it, so that’s that,” and then while voice training I’m like “Well I’m just gonna feel weird about my voice forever, and that’s that,” and now I’m just like “Meh. It’s my voice. It’s cool.”

**Tuck:** Is there stuff that you do for voice alteration that you still have to think about, or is everything just like locked and loaded natural at this point?

**Mckenzee:** This is literally my voice when I wake up in the morning now. I do a couple vocal warm-ups in the shower, and that’s really just to like dislodge the wonderful mucus in my vocal tract, and other than that this is just what I sound like. It was something that I consciously was thinking about every single day, every single time like I said something I’d be like, “Oh, raise your larynx. How’s your resonance?” blah blah blah. And now this is just how I sound like, and now if I want to do my old voice I’d have to do like warm-down training to get there. My mom, who’s generally pretty supportive about having a fresh daughter, asked me in the car, halfway into voice training, “Do you really need to change your voice?” and I was like [in a deeper voice] “Would you rather I talk like this again?” and she was like, “No.” and I’m like, “Okay.” [Tuck laughs]

**Tuck:** Ohh. When I was on TikTok there were like several trans teen girls, and one of their main things on TikTok was just to be like, doing fun voice pranks where they would just do videos or they would switch between two gender voices.

[glimmering sound effect, TikTok clip plays]

**TikToker:** [voice clip] One of my favorite questions that I get as a trans woman is, “What is your real voice?” and, um my answer is [in a very deep voice] “Why do you even care? Like, it’s not that deep. Seriously, like, mind your business.”

**Tuck:** I don’t know why, it just brings me so much joy. I just, I think it’s very, like, “Gender is fake,” you know? It’s very just, like, we could all be doing any of this at any time. [Laughs]

**Mckenzee:** Oh, yeah, we sure could. And like, halfway through voice training I was like, “I can never go back down to that depth,” like, “It’ll be the worst thing that ever happened,” and now I’m like “This is the funniest bit in the world,” and I love breaking it out whenever I want.

**Tuck:** All right, well, another thing you did on your gender speedrun was get special girl bottom surgery, and I believe that the main reason we’re here today—although it’s also to hang out—is to talk about special girl bottom surgery, so could you please tell us what it is, and what it’s actually called?

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, so, it’s called “special girl bottom surgery” and it’s only for special girls. [Tucks laughs] Okay, no. So, special girl bottom surgery, also known as minimal-depth, also known as zero-depth—which I take objection to—so, also called just a vulvoplasty, also called I think sometimes like “aesthetic vulvoplasty”? I don’t know.

**Tuck:** Aesthetic!

**Mckenzee:** Uh, so it has a lot of names, but basically the idea is it’s bottom surgery for people who want a vulva, and they do all the things except, at the part where they’re like “Now, let’s make a whole-ass vaginal cavity,” they don’t do that. That’s the special girl difference, is that they do less work. We’re talking about it because it’s something that I feel like very few people have heard about for some reason, despite it being an option. When I started doing research for vaginoplasty—because I was like, “I would like a wagina”—I was never really excited at the idea of dilation, or maintenance, or having to ever think about it, for a number of reasons. One of which is that I am a chronic overthinker, and a chronic like over-doer of body things, so the idea of having one more thing on my list of like thinking about, progressing, and like what if it changes, what if it’s not as good, blah blah blah… really not good for my brain. So I was doin’ some googling, and then they were like, “One option is: minimal-depth.” The moment I saw it I was like, “Oh, that’s actually for me! That’s really exciting,” and it’s basically the exact same thing minus one step, so it’s not like this wildly different thing. But, [sighs] until like relatively recently, a lot of surgeons wouldn’t do minimal-depth for like really messed up expectations of, “Well, why would you want a vagina if you don’t want a vaginal cavity that somebody can penetrate?” Blah, blah blah, blah blah. And so, they just wouldn’t do it, and now that’s no longer the case. I thought I was gonna have to convince some surgeon to do it and like be like [whispering] “Oh, can you give me the special girl surgery? I don’t know if that’s okay or not,” but then, when I went to like an informational session, they were like, “We do full-depth or minimal-depth,” and I was really excited again. And, um, it just seems like every time I talk to somebody about doing minimal-depth, like 95% of the time they’re just like, “I had no idea that was an option,” and that’s very exciting to me. So I’m trying to tell everybody about it without being weird about it, so that’s why I’m on this podcast talking about it.

**Tuck:** Yeah. For minimal-depth, is it a different recovery process or anything different than you need to do than for full-depth, or is it like basically exactly the same in terms of recovery?

**Mckenzee:** Generally, minimal-depth is considered to be a much quicker recovery process because they are not—to be quite graphic—making a new vaginal canal using penile skin and then making it go into your body. So—

**Tuck:** Is that graphic? I was gonna say “boring a hole into you.”

**Mckenzee:** Oh—

**Tuck:** Is that more or less graphic? [Laughs]

**Mckenzee:** I don’t know.

**Tuck:** Go ahead.

**Mckenzee:** [Laughs] But, yeah, so it’s considered a much less invasive procedure, because that’s generally considered the most invasive part. To be clear, they are still shortening your urethra like six inches, and like making you a vulva, and dissecting and putting all of your nerve endings into completely new places, and it’s very cool and exciting, and like, looks very hot. But not having to do to the whole, like, maintaining depth takes a lot off of the table in terms of recovery time. I was like—maybe inadvisably—walking around and like chilling within like two weeks, and within six weeks I had no more restrictions and they were like, “You can do whatever you want now, you just have a vagina.” So, for me, it was quite wonderful. Obviously everyone’s experience will vary, because it is still a pretty major surgery but like, I get to just live my life now and I never have to think about it again. I don’t think that minimal-depth is for everybody, and I feel like you’ll know very quickly if like the idea of minimal-depth is appealing or not based on like what you want out of your life, but for me it completely resolved my bottom dysphoria, and like, I’m just so happy basically every day still almost a year into having it. If for some reason you’re like “Oh no, this was a terrible idea. I got minimal-depth and, like, I really should have gotten full-depth,” they have a number of different revision options to add depth, so it’s not like a one and done like, “You’ve made your decision and now you must live with it forever,” type thing.

**Tuck:** I recently said on It’s Been a Minute that I never ask people about their transition on the podcast, but this is a transition-themed episode of the podcast, and so let me just ask you this: you’ve been on HRT for a few years now. Is there anything that surprised you with your experience with HRT or just that you’ve heard from other girlies?

**Mckenzee:** There’s like so many different things that switching over to estrogen does for you body, and like, I think this is true for all HRT. Like, it’s such a long game. I think so many people are like, “You’ll get your changes in like the first year, and then like that’ll be basically it,” and like, that’s such bullshit. There are still so many moments when I look in the mirror from like a different angle and be like, “My face is entirely different than it was like six months ago,” and I’ve been on estrogen I think for like four years now, which is not that long, but like, you know, I think there’s like a bit of a pernicious myth about like, “Oh, you gotta start it when you’re 19,” and also, “If you don’t get these changes now you’ll never get those changes,” and like, it’s just not true. This stuff just takes time, and like, it’s all just good stuff happening. You know, like I’ve tried almost every different form of trying estrogen at this point so now I’ve got big opinions on like cypionate versus valerate and all this stuff. But I think what’s been so exciting about it is just, it just feels like a gift. Everything that it does feels so good. I love the way that fat is redistributing on my body slowly. I love the way that I experience different sensations now.

**Tuck:** Was there anything, like, wacky?

**Mckenzee:** Wacky…. I mean, I think progesterone’s really the wacky one, because you get real wild dreams on it. One wacky thing—I don’t know if this is specifically a going on estrogen thing, but like, I used to sleep super well and now I don’t sleep well at all. Or, like, I have a hard time going to sleep and staying asleep. I guess like, hm. I guess feeling things is pretty wacky if you’ve never felt things before. [Both laugh] But yeah, I don’t know. Like, anything that’s wacky is just also me at this point.

**Tuck:** Is there anything you were worried about going in? Because I feel like people thinking about going on testosterone are constantly like, “But what if this happens!?” and I never hear that from people going on E, except maybe like, “I’ll get less good at rock climbing,” or something.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, I’ve definitely gotten less good at rock climbing. I think my biggest concern going on E, to be honest, was that I used to really use my strength training and like getting stronger as the thing I did to feel better as a person, and sometimes not in the healthiest of ways. And so I think the only concern I really had going in on estrogen was like, “Oh no, what if I can’t be as capable, in different ways, than I used to be?” And I think part of that was just like a broader narrative of “What if I am more vulnerable?” which I suppose anyone would feel just changing their entire body and changing the way that they’re perceived in the world. And now I’m just—you know, full disclosure—I am way weaker than I used to ever be in my life. I think I was probably lifting heavier when I was in high school than now, but I’m also just so much happier that it doesn’t really matter. So, there just comes like a moment of acceptance and peace of like, the changes are going to eventually be physical, but that doesn’t mean that you’re necessarily losing something in the process.

**Tuck:** I can’t believe you’re setting feminism back 50 years like this.

**Mckenzee:** [Chuckles] So sorry, everybody.

**Tuck:** At least you’re simultaneously boosting our narrative that trans women should be allowed to do sports cause they’re so weak, so, you know, it’s fine. It’s okay. [Laughs]

**Mckenzee:** So sorry, everybody.

**Tuck:** So, as you’ve been doing this speedrun, are there other things in your life that aren’t directly related to transsexuality or whatever that are also changing, like your opinions on things? Because, for me, I feel like there are things in my life where I was like, “Oh, I’m not interested in this thing,” and then it turned out it was actually just like, “I’m not interested in being a girl and doing this thing as a girl.” Are there things that you’re like more exited about now that you get to do them as a girl?

**Mckenzee:** Oh, definitely. One particularly stupid thing that I’ve done in the last year is I decided to buy myself a fancy girl makeup vanity, and it is very dumb and I love it, and when I, uh, “was not a girl,” quote unquote unquote unquote, I always prided myself on how quickly I could get out the door and get ready for things and be like, “Oh, yeah, I just woke up but I’ll be in the car in six minutes and that’ll be wonderful.” And now like—god help me—I’ve got like a morning routine that takes like at least an hour, and I’m so happy about it. It makes me so freakin’ happy, and I think it’s just like letting myself be silly and like letting myself just lean into feminine things, and like letting myself just be happy and take care of myself in ways that I didn’t feel like I either deserved or should be doing before. And like, that’s not to say that only girls take care of themselves, obviously, but I think it speaks to like a larger truth of like, I didn’t necessarily feel like I deserved to take care of myself before, and I didn’t feel like there was anything worth taking care of, and now I just want to give myself like so much retroactive care and love. It’s kind of a lot to think about when you say it out loud like that. I don’t think I necessarily thought of myself in such dire terms before, but I certainly wasn’t very generous to myself as I am now.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Do you feel like your relationships with people have changed, or the things you wanted out of your relationships with people have changed, or the dynamic has changed because the gender dynamic is like, on-paper different? Is there anything about that that has adjusted?

**Mckenzee:** It’s hard for me to like—to really like untangle how much of that was “changing my gender” quote unquote, and like just going to therapy and learning about boundaries.

**Tuck:** Mhm….

**Mckenzee:** Um. [chuckles] I think I’m just a lot better at advocating for my needs and desires than I ever used to be.

**Tuck:** Well here’s a question then: do you feel like you could’ve done everything you just did if you hadn’t learned about boundaries?

**Mckenzee:** I think they were both important. Took me, like, quite a long time of like accepting my gender before like, after that I went to therapy. But I think having a better sense of who I was and like what I wanted out of the world gave me the opportunity to I guess explore, like, where else I might not have been giving myself that space. Because I feel like if I didn’t go to therapy, I would obviously still be a girl; I think I’d just be much less healthy at it.

**Tuck:** [Laughs] Yeah, I guess I was just wondering how much of the last several months has been like you figuring out what you want, versus like finally feeling comfortable in doing what you want for yourself, you know what I mean?

**Mckenzee:** Yeah. That’s a good question, and I don’t know if I’d be able to parse those apart right now. Might take another couple years.

**Tuck:** All right, well, what else do you want to talk about while you’re here?

**Mckenzee:** I mean, we could talk about podcast gender.

**Tuck:** Okay, what else do you want to say about podcast gender? You already talked about podcast voice.

**Mckenzee:** So there’s podcast voice, but like, podcast gender…. Like, the idea of being here on the gender podcast of record, coming on in like 2017 and being like, “This is definitely my gender, this is what I know is going on with me….” It’s really important for me to have the grace to be kind to myself in 2017, even though I have a completely different mindset when it comes to gender. And, I guess by extension, knowing that it’s completely okay that if in another five years I came back on this podcast with a completely different conception of gender, I should be able to give myself that same kindness in the future and not be so attached to this sense of solidity, or rightness, or like, “This is the only way to be.” It’s very squishy to share a big messy gender journey with a bunch of people that you’re never gonna see, especially when you don’t have the one trans narrative that everybody’s expecting. Even being somebody that like answers a lot of gender advice questions, it’s still sometimes a little scary to be like, “Yeah, I really wasn’t entirely sure what was going on with me before, and now I have a different way of presenting that information.” So yeah, gender podcast good actually, but also scary.

**Tuck:** Good *actually*? Gender podcast good *actually*?

**Mckenzee:** [Laughs] Gender podcast very good.

**Tuck:** Wow! Hmm….

**Mckenzee:** How about, “Sharing vulnerable gender journey on gender podcast good actually?”

**Tuck:** [Laughs] Okay, I’ll accept it. But yeah, I mean, I think like maybe you’ve had a more dramatic gender journey than soooome of the people on the podcast, but I would say a lot a lot a lot of people who we talked to four or five years ago have a really different relationship with gender now, and the difference is just that you get to keep coming back and updating people and everyone else is just… people heard from them once and they don’t know what’s gone on since then because we can’t just run gender updates on the gender podcast constantly or we’d never get anywhere. But, [sighs] I just.... It’s important to acknowledge that you and I, and Gabe, and the really obvious ones, are not the only people that are like having gender journeys mid-podcast. And, you know, when we get to the future where every single trans person has their own gender podcast, we’ll all see it. [Laughs]

**Mckenzee:** Yeah. The last year has felt like a gift that’s too big for the occasion for me. I didn’t realize that I could feel so good about things. And like, that’s really cool, because I feel like it’s easy to get so lost in the weeds with it, and like, get really like self-interrogate-y, and like worried, and like going around and round with the same ideas, but, like, for somebody who thinks way too much about everything it’s truly wild that I can just not think about it so much.

**Tuck:** I mean, I do think it’s gotta be good to hear, because there are so many people who write in and say, “I can’t stop thinking about gender,” and I’m sure it feels good to have someone besides me say, “Eventually you’ll stop thinking so much about gender. Eventually you’ll just think about other things. You’ll have other hobbies.” There was some right-wing person who was like, “Kids don’t have hobbies anymore, their hobbies are like, being transgender,” and I’m like, “No, that’s true though, unfortunately.” [Laughs] Like, that is true.

**Mckenzee:** Yeah, it was such a large project of my life to figure that part of me out. Last weekend was my very last electrolysis appointment ever—

**Tuck:** Woo!

**Mckenzee:** —and now I don’t have any gender-related things on my calendar anymore.

**Tuck:** You’ve transitioned. [Laughs] This is it, baby. You’re done.

**Mckenzee:** I did it. We’re really livin’ post-transition now. But like, also true! Like, also I need to figure out what else should occupy that hole in my head where there used to just be filled with gender questions. It’s kind of a new world, after many years of that being the thing that I thought about.

**Tuck:** What are your hobbies gonna be?

**Mckenzee:** Marxism, probably.

**Tuck:** Cool, cool, cool. Uh, well, you know, if you get bored you can always like invent a new type of gender-affirming surgery, and we’ll all say you’re really brave for doing it. So.

**Mckenzee:** Toe reduction surgery.

**Tuck:** W-what?

**Mckenzee:** Toe reduction surgery. Toes too big.

**Tuck:** Toes too big…

**Mckenzee:** What if smaller? [Both chuckle]

**Tuck:** I feel like, you stay on HRT long enough it’ll do toe reduction for you, right? Isn’t that how it works?

**Mckenzee:** I mean, it did foot reduction but now I just got these giant toes.

**Tuck:** I see. Foot good, toes bad. Yeah.

**Mckenzee:** Bad for gender.

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Mckenzee:** Good for tippy toes.

**Tuck:** I hope we’re giving everyone like a big complex about toe length. You know, speaking of things that other people feel self-conscious about, there’s like that thing that I see constantly of transmascs going, “Oh my god, men are going to catch me being trans in the bathroom because my pee is gonna sound different,” and I’m like, “What is wrong with you?” But we’re gonna invent a new one called “I’m gonna get clocked by toes too long,” [Both laugh] and uh, congrats to everyone out there with that new complex.

**Mckenzee:** So sorry. Gender stored in the toes.

**Tuck:** I’m sure you’re not the first one to say it, but yeah, gender stored in the toes! Mm, dang it. Well, you never saw this coming, but the way we always end the show is by asking, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Mckenzee:** The last year has been so good for my brain and for my gender, and I just want to see a world where everybody who’s doing a gender or doing no gender can also feel really good doing gender or no gender out in the world. And different guests have said variations of this, but I feel like it is probably my most truthful answer as well, which is like, I just wish gender was like, an opt-in, joyful-based system as opposed to like, something really imposed and oppressive for a lot of people. I just want people to feel good about gender if they want to feel good, or at least not really bad about gender all the time.

[Gender Reveal theme 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 any potential future minimal-depth vagina-enjoyers in your life. You can find Mckenzee at mckenzeegriffler.com and opensanctuary.org and on many, many episodes of this very podcast. You can find us on Instagram and Twitter @gendereveal and at genderpodcast.com, where all of our episode transcriptions live. We are also at patreon.com/gender, where you can find an exclusive spicy-advicey episode with Mckenzee as well as like ten other bonus episodes and hundreds of newsletters and pictures of my cat. You can also sometimes find Mckenzee and I in the Gender Detective Slack community, the link for that changes all the time, but I’ll put a current link in the show notes and you can always DM me for an updated link. Anyone is welcome there, and it’s a great place to talk about what the hell gender is.

This episode was produced and 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]

**Mckenzee:** Uh, you know, ultimately gender’s just really stupid, so, you know.

**Tuck:** [Laughs] That’s what we’re leaving with. And now the podcast is over, Gender Reveal is done. Mckenzee has deemed gender “really stupid.” We’re done here.

**Mckenzee:** God.

**Tuck:** On to Toe Reveal, [Mckenzee chuckles] made by wikifeet.com.

**Mckenzee:** Five out of five! I dunno, do you think there was anything that needed to be said?

**Tuck:** No, I don’t think so.

**Mckenzee:** Did I fail the quiz?

**Tuck:** Yeah, I’m gonna make you take the COGIATI live on podcast. [Mckenzee chuckles]

**Mckenzee:** Uh, I was a type 2 transsexual, thank you. [Tuck laughs] I love the COGIATI. Makes me feel great.