**Tuck:** We can probably all agree that we don’t want strangers to be able to look up our phone numbers, e-mail addresses, physical addresses, criminal histories, et cetera, et cetera, on the World Wide Web. And the best way to avoid this is to pay a website like DeleteMe to scrub all of your personal information from hundreds of data broker sites across the web. You can go to joindeleteme.com/GenderReveal to get 10% off your first year of DeleteMe. Make yourself a little bit safer out there on the Internet. That is joindeleteme.com/GenderReveal.

[Gender Reveal theme music plays]

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

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone, I hope you’re hanging in there. Disclaimer right off the top: if you are a new Gender Reveal listener, do not start here. This is absolutely not a normal one!

Okay, that’s it. Everyone else: hello. It is finally time for you to experience this month’s Gender Reveal live show. As you may have heard me say hundreds of times before, we had a live show on February 1st at The Bell House in Brooklyn. More than 300 people came, which was so cool, and that included a couple folks from Portland. I don’t know which Portland, but either way, wild, and also someone who traveled from Tucson, Arizona. Shout out to that person. I hope it ended up being worth it?

Anyway, this show was by all accounts an absolute blast. I did like stand-up comedy at the beginning and then Ozzy probably wisely cut that out of the episode. Harsh but fair. So I guess you’ll have to come to another live show if you want to hear my version of a tight 10 about transsexuality.

Instead, in this episode, you will hear our interview with the amazing AC Dumlao, as well as a handful of advice questions tackled by our hilarious friends, Io and Mattie Lubchansky. We also did a very fun segment with Sabrina Imbler called Duck Duck Gay, which is a game that relies almost entirely on visual gags, so we will be releasing the audio for that along with the accompanying PowerPoint exclusively on our bonus podcast Gender Conceal. That is available on our Patreon, so if you’d like to experience what was by all accounts the best part of the night, head to patreon.com/gender and get signed up for the bonus podcast and you’ll be all good to go when we end up releasing that. Will it translate to a podcast? We’ll find out!

Speaking of our Patreon, though, we are getting very close to wrapping up our tenth season of Gender Reveal. This is the penultimate episode of the season, so after next week this feed will go quiet for a few months while we work on the next season. But our Patreon does not stop. So if you’d like to get a new bonus episode every month and a behind the scenes newsletter every single week, you will again want to go to patreon.com/gender, and by signing up and throwing us a few dollars every month, you are genuinely helping us continue to make the show. So thank you.

And hey, while we’re doing announcements, I have a few more for you. Bear with me. First of all, you may have noticed that our merch shop has been on hiatus for a couple of months. There’s now a couple of designs in there, just some classics for your emergency merch needs, but by the time Pride hits, I would love to have a robust selection of new designs. So if you would like to contribute a design to the shop, we would love to take a look at it. You could submit ideas or fully realized transparent PNGs, whichever you prefer, at gendereveal@gmail.com. That is gendereveal@gmail.com.

And speaking of iconic community art projects, look, you all know me. I can never take a break for one minute of my entire life. So instead of using the gap between seasons to rest literally at all, I have teamed up with Niko Stratis and a team of other maniacs to create an all-trans Fast and Furious fanzine/anthology/DIY art thing. I don’t know what it’s going to, be but it’s going to be cool and fast. We are soliciting short pieces about anything Fast and Furious related. They can be essays, artwork, comics, reviews, power rankings, recipes? There’s a D&D one-shot, and so whatever you can come up with is great. The more specific and weird, the better. I would love this to be fun and zany and just extremely unserious. Submissions are due March 22nd. If you want to pitch to us before you spend your time making the thing, the pitches are due March 7th. If you are interested, head to genderpodcast.com/fast-zine for the full submission guidelines. Link in the show notes. Godspeed and good luck.

Okay, last but not least, Trans Day of Visibility is coming up in March, which means that Trans Day of Staying In and Having a Nice Snack is also coming up, which means that we need to figure out this year’s mutual aid project. I will come up with something, but if you have ideas for exactly what we should do, I would love to hear them. You can contact us in any way you can figure out. There’s also a mutual aid channel on the Gender Reveal Slack. Otherwise, keep an eye out on social media for us to announce whatever we ended up doing. I don’t know, but we will be giving money to trans people, and that’s what matters. And now it’s finally time for This Week in Gender.

[Gentle, cheerful tones play]

**Tuck:** So in case you haven’t heard about this—well, actually, let’s start at the beginning. You know how the New York Times is just constantly publishing articles sort of questioning whether trans people should deserve to exist? Yeah, you know them, they’re like, should trans kids be able to access puberty blockers or play sports or wear binders or exist in society, et cetera, et cetera? Well, a bunch of really smart New York Times contributors like Jo Livingstone, Harron Walker, Muna Mire…a few weeks ago they all teamed up and wrote an open letter to the New York Times Standards Desk asking them to, like, cut it out, but in a really professional, thoughtful, well-cited way. You can actually read the full letter for yourself at nytletter.com. That letter was published on Wednesday, February 15. When it came out, it had signatures from 180 New York Times contributors signing on, and as of this recording, which is less than 36 hours later, there are now more than 1,000 New York Times contributors who have signed this letter. This includes so many Gender Reveal guests. It also includes big names like Cynthia Nixon, Sarah Schulman, Rebecca Solnit, Rebecca Traister—the two Rebeccas I’m constantly mixing up, they both signed it. It also had space for people to sign if they are not a New York Times contributor, they’re just signing in support, and right now that list has more than 24,000 names on it.

At the same time, on the same day, GLAAD you know GLAAD, GLAAD wrote a very similar letter. But instead of using a sort of like professional tone that like, you were writing to like a senior colleague, they used this, like, sassy advocacy tone that was really much more like, “Hey, you guys, cut that out.” That GLAAD open letter was signed mostly by LGBTQ organizations like Athlete Ally and Ali Forney Center and then celebrities like Amy Schneider, Judd Apatow, Zackary Drucker, Gabrielle Union, et cetera, et cetera.

So these two letters are saying roughly the same thing to the New York Times on the same day, but with very different tones. And what has happened is basically this New York Times PR guy who, just as a complete tangent, this PR guy, his entire career has been in like the military and the NSA, and then one year ago, he left the NSA to do comms for the New York Times, and I’m just like, where are you getting these people? What is going on here? Anyway, this NSA New York Times guy, he puts out this statement that only mentions the GLAAD letter and seems to sort of conflate the two letters, but is basically like, “Yes, GLAAD doesn’t like our coverage, of course an advocacy organization is not going to have the same goals as the New York Times, and it’s completely fine and normal for GLAAD to disagree with us. But that doesn’t mean that we would ever listen to an advocacy organization.” And everyone was like, “Wow, it’s really weird that you’re ignoring this other article written by journalists that was signed by, you know, 1,000 reporters and 24,000 other people.” That NSA New York Times PR guy also said, and I want to get this quote right, “The very news stories criticized in their letter reported deeply and empathetically on issues of care and well-being for trans teens and adults. We’re proud of our reporting.”

Okay, so we all go to bed, we wake up, and we see that the New York Times has rushed to publish an opinion piece by notorious columnist Pamela Paul that is entitled “In Defense of JK Rowling.” So they literally the previous night had been like, “Uh, I don’t know what you’re talking about. We report very deeply and empathetically about trans people. What’s going on?” And then they’re like “Quick, but as fast as we can, let’s publish an op ed that defends a billionaire whose whole thing is hating trans people.”

Okay, this is already more than enough, but then later that same day, which is actually today, February 16th, the day I’m recording this—that same day, the New York Times sends out an internal e-mail to their entire newsroom and their entire opinions team, so I think like thousands of people, that is clearly meant to shame anyone who signed the letter and silence any internal dissent. They write that, quote, “They will not tolerate participation by Times journalists and protests organized by advocacy groups or attacks on colleagues on social media and other public forums.” And just to be clear, when they’re talking about attacking colleagues, what they actually mean is just you can’t point out specific colleagues’ errors publicly. And it’s really frustrating because this actually happens all the time. I have heard many, many times by trans people at major news organizations that they are not allowed to call out inaccuracies in trans coverage because it might hurt the reporter’s feelings.

Anyway. A very fascinating and infuriating thing is that this internal memo, like the PR statement that was put out earlier, does not acknowledge Harron, Jo, and Muna’s open letter signed by thousands of journalists in any way. It tries to conflate that letter with the GLAAD letter and claim that the journalists all signed a letter by the advocacy organization GLAAD, which just didn’t happen. It’s just not true. And the New York Times knows it’s not true. But they know that if they say, “Hey, you’re in trouble for signing a letter written by the advocacy organization GLAAD,” they have a much stronger case than saying, “Hey, journalists are not allowed to critique the New York Times.”

Okay, I don’t know if any of that made any sense, but if you would like to see what the hell I’m talking about, there’s approximately 1,000,000 tweets and retweets about it at twitter.com/tuckwoodstock. And of course, you can see the original letter and sign it for yourself at nytletter.com. And I don’t normally say this kind of shit, and the letter doesn’t ask you to do it, but if you’re still subscribing to the New York Times, can I politely suggest that you unsubscribe and then tell them why? Because this is really just getting completely ridiculous. This has been This Week in Gender.

[Gentle, cheerful tones fade out]

**Tuck:** We have a Theymail message for you this week. This message is from Ari Conrad Birch and it says, “The team behind the soon-to-be-released documentary A Queer’s Guide to Spiritual Living is looking for original poetry, prose, photography, and illustration to feature in a zine that will accompany the release of the film. Some topics of interest include queerness as a spiritual practice, non-religious spirituality, and queer interpretations of religious traditions. Visit queersguide.com or @queers.guide on Instagram for more info.

[Gender Reveal theme music plays]

**Tuck:** We do have one guest from season one who we’re going to bring back today to see what they’ve been up to in the last five years. So they are Chief of Staff at Athlete Ally, they are the creator of the hashtag #menswearselfcare, and they are a devoted Gaylor truther. Please welcome to the stage AC Dumlao! [crowd cheers] And the way we always start the show is by asking in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**AC:** The other day... [crowd laughs] You think Tuck’s the only stand-up comedian here? [crowd laughs] The other day, I’m like, rushing to get to the train at the end of the block in my, you know, 5’2” small human self, big pink puffer. And tise delivery person calls out to me, rushing, they go, “Young guy! Where’s 525?” And I’m like, “That one’s this number, and I don’t know where it is and I’m going to miss the train....” And then I ran away, and then I was like, “Wow, I just felt really gender affirmed by that person.” So.

**Tuck:** It’s gender-affirming for you to be unhelpful to service people. [crowd laughs]

**AC:** Exactly! So my answer is specifically that delivery person saying young guy, and I use they and he pronouns. Call Me They/He, in the style of “Call Me Maybe.”

**Tuck:** Okay, so I realized so recently that I have been singing Call Me They/He in my head to the wrong, I’ve been singing it to Call Your Girlfriend! I’m like, that’s wrong! Just like, I’m sorry.

**AC:** That’s a little sadder.

**Tuck:** It’s like a mournful pronoun situation. So you were on the show 2017, 2018. Do you feel your gender has changed since then?

**AC:** Yes

**Tuck:** What’s changed?

**AC:** What has changed? That’s a follow-up question.

**Tuck:** [laughs] I’m sorry. Okay, moving on, so. You work for Athlete Ally.

**AC:** No, no, no, my, how has my gender changed? I started using he pronouns in addition to they/them pronouns last year. I mean, I feel like I continue to evolve in whatever young guy I am.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I love that. That’s good. So you, you’re talking to me about how you’re a call me they/he, famously sung, but also like a he/they at work. And like I think that’s... I mean, he/they in the streets, they/he in the sheets is so funny. But I did feel, I mean like seriously, like we’re doing jokes, but like I did feel like there was a thing when I started being like, “Oh, actually ‘he’ in in work settings” where I did feel like I was like leaving the fight somehow. Like I was like, I’m like not going to make all these businesspeople they/them me anymore because frankly, I don’t want to. But like that means that someone else will have to then fight that person about it. Did you have any, like, any kind of, like, feelings about changing that at work?

**AC:** I actually started putting he first as like a challenge to the general corporate cishet person I was to interact with as like, “You really can’t mess up misgendering me. I’m, like, giving you a straight binary option and then the more difficult 201 they/them option, and so if you dare misgender me as she/her like you’re gonna feel really awful.” So it’s mostly about shame. [crowd cheers]

**Tuck:** Yeah. I do think it’s like, so funny when people do mess up the only way that they possibly can. The last time I saw my—sorry to my mom, but the last time that I saw my mom, she started doing a thing where she would say all of them in rapid succession. So she would go, “She’s over there! They’re over there! He’s over there!”

**AC:** So that’s like two out of three.

**Tuck:** Right. Like you could have stopped somewhere in there. Before we dive into the many fun things, can we talk about Athlete Ally? Maybe that’s also fun. Sorry, but like, you know, work, the concept of work.

**AC:** No, it’s fun.

**Tuck:** What do you do? What do you do? What is it?

**AC:** So I work at an organization called Athlete Ally. We are a nonprofit dedicated to ending homophobia and transphobia in sports, so there’s not a lot to do. [crowd laughs] But yeah, I started working there December 2021. So I just celebrated one year. Chief of staff is kind of like a fake title. My only reference for it prior to becoming it was like the White House and like, I don’t want to be associated with that. But I do a lot of more internal like operations, pay the bills, kind of stuff and I’m really happy to be there and support like my very badass colleagues. Like my colleague literally was just in Missouri testifying against some garbage people just so that, you know, kids can play sports and stuff with their friends.

**Tuck:** I feel like a line that we’re always trying to ride on the podcast, especially like the news segment is like, okay, I don’t want to pretend that all of these laws and all these fights aren’t happening, but also like, does it serve trans people to be like, continually reminded how many people are trying to ban us from existing? Do you feel like there are things that trans people specifically like should be aware of the work you are doing, like ways that we can support that’s not just like reading the news and like feeling bad and then being like, well, I feel bad now. You know, but like, actually useful things?

**AC:** Yeah, I would say actually like, read the news *less* to feel less bad. But I do think that like…it’s really important for our cis people in our lives to know what’s going on, and I don’t know, I think that obviously, there’s such a focus is on trans people in sports. But I think it’s like, also an opportunity to be like everyone plays sports or hates sports or has a feeling about sports as a concept, right? Like, you know, sports touches everyone, no matter your language or your country, et cetera, and so sports is just like the vehicle through which, you know, people who hate us are trying to take away our rights. Like it’s been bathrooms. It’s been work, it’s been jobs. And right now it’s sports. So just would really love people to just talk about why it’s important for people to be able to move their bodies or like hate the concept of it, but let people who want to do it, do it.

**Tuck:** Yeah, you know, I got stuck on that—you were talking about, like, really important, serious things. And I was thinking about like, oh, Athlete Ally. I thought it was like an ally to queer athletes, but it’s actually an ally to people who want to be athletes. It’s like I hate sports, but I’m an ally to people who play sports! [Tuck and crowd laugh]

**AC:** Yeah, exactly! I mean, I famously was a theater major. And, you know, my experience with sports—yeah, that’s very funny, you can laugh about that one—is, you know, three years of softball, which is what made me into what I am today. [crowd laughs] Put that in a testimony. But I’m an ally to athletes.

**Tuck:** Yeah, and that’s beautiful. I think that’s beautiful. I think you and I were talking, I do want to talk about the theater of it all, but real quick, I know you and I were talking about the pipeline from being like “baby trans must post” and like creating Call Me They the Facebook page, creating #menswearselfcare the hashtag and then moving into this sort of like inward-facing, not public-facing job. Is that something you did really intentionally?

**AC:** Yeah, 100%. So, you know, five years ago, when we sounded different and had different haircuts, and all these you know, different things of who we are, baby trans me was like “I need to post all the time and say all the things that I’m feeling.” And that was like really part of me coming out, was kind of, you know, feeling so revved up to speak out. And I think it was also at the same time, kind of, you know nonbinary, the concept was super hot, as you may know. And like now, five years later, I have taken like a really intentional step for my daily work to be internal. Fewer speaking gigs... as I speak on this platform and on this podcast! [Tuck laughs]

But yeah, I really was getting really burnt out about that. And the way that I used to post all the time and you know, a lot of people know me from Call Me They and #menswearselfcare and now it’s like I got to get on the grid, got to show that I’m still alive. But it’s really been good, because having that space to be less exposed to the elements of the world of many, many trainings with the cishet people that I dared to misgender me at law firms and corporations has allowed me to discover the they/he of it all, and like evolve to the next version of AC and it yeah, it’s brought me a lot of peace. But also, maybe I’ll post again a lot more?

**Tuck:** I mean, I think of that when we’re bashing our head into the wall about trans discourse online like never getting anywhere, I think it is because there’s this relationship where it’s like when you come out, you’re like “I have to post,” and then once you learn anything, you stop posting.

**AC:** Yes!

**Tuck:** It’s like, “Oh, it’s weird that like the takes are always bad!” Yeah. All right. That was our five minutes of serious conversation. Theater. You were in Rent recently. [several pronounced cheers] Five people are really excited.

**AC:** They’re so excited. There may be people in the audience who were in Rent with me, so that’s pretty cool. Yes, I checked off the bucket list item and I was in a community theater production of Rent, and that was pretty amazing. And it was also a big part of, like, my gender journey. I was cast as Angel and it was super intimidating because I was like, you know, this character is so important to me, to us as the trans community. Like the way that you know, she was originally conceived as arguably a trans femme or trans woman, and what was really amazing was I was talking to the director when I was kind of deciding if I would take the role. And he was like, we’re going to change the pronouns to what you want, like, ultimately like, this character’s story is really important. And like we want you to, like, own it and make it your own. And I turned Angel into this gender fabulous, like bright pink hair, they/them creature person and it was a really beautiful experience I’m really grateful for.

But yeah, it was actually through that experience that I ended up finally, not even finally, I legally changed my name recently. [crowd cheers] Yeah! Which is super wild, because prior to Athlete Ally, I worked almost five years specifically on trans name changes on the legal name change process, getting to consult on policy work. And, but like, I was like, “But I’m never going to change my name. Like I just go by my initials like, why am I going to do that?” But being called Angel all the time, like it gave me kind of this push to change my legal name to Angel, actually. But yeah, it’s kind of wild. Names are weird when you’re one of us.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Well, can you talk about that more? Because I was asking you, you’re like, “Oh, I changed my legal name to Angel.” And I was like, “Oh, should we call you that?” And you were like, “No, no, no, no.” So can you talk about the specific use case for you changing your name?

**AC:** This is, it’s really great because, I, constantly my friends and loved ones are asking me what they can call me and I always give an answer that is unhelpful. So I’ll give that answer now—a version of it. So my birth name is in the world of Angel, right? And I go by my initials AC. But I think part of my impostor syndrome of being nonbinary and trans was like, well, I don’t have a deadname, like my given name is very much alive, but it’s alive specifically for people who I know and love, who knew me before I came out as nonbinary. And when they call me by that name, I know that they see me for me and like I am okay with that—in fact, I love that. And it’s reserved only for them.

And I’ve actually had times when whatever, when I was, like, angrily writing about Trump or the trans military ban—TBT to like, all of that. I had a friend, like a new friend reach out and was like, “Hey, like, I want you to know like your deadname is still on this post,” and like I was like, “Eh…not going to go into the spiel.” But I thought deeply about it, like, that’s not my deadname. It’s a name in a specific case, and now I still want my initials because it’s great to have my initials. It’s a name that people know me by, it’s my stage name, theater, et cetera. But really, I—this is like sounds like a joke, but whenever I go into the hot desk at my office, I go to Wendy’s. And unlike like a Starbucks or wherever, where you know, they ask for your name at the front, like when I’m, like dialing in the pad to get my things, I put in my debit card. They pull my name or anyone’s name from their debit card. And I really didn’t like my birth name just being yelled out at the Wendy’s, and so now I can like the name that is yelled out at Wendy’s when I pick up my order. [crowd cheers] And yeah, and like other lots of little things. Like, there’s those use cases for government name and it’s just more affirming and super confusing to people, including me.

**Tuck:** I just want to emphasize like so many people are like, should I change my name? It feels like such a big deal once I change it, I can never change it again. And it’s like, you can change your name to make it easier to go to Wendy’s. Like you can do anything you want!

**AC:** 100%.

**Tuck:** Really, the world is your oyster. Amazing. Beautiful. Can you say more about, like, how playing Angel affected your experience of your gender? I just feel like there’s got to be stuff there. You said your name, but was there like other gender in there?

**AC:** Yeah, I mean like, so I have really come into loving the color hot pink. Coming into like being nonbinary and you know, being assigned female at birth and queerness was like, I needed to like push away all things I considered feminine to like truly establish myself as a queer person or, you know, get my queer card or whatever. And I was like, well, obviously I don’t want to, like, claim pink just because I was told I was a girl. But like, I claim pink because I think it’s really cool and I want to wear it all the time. And so one of the parts of playing Angel was I was like, I want to dye my hair pink, and a part of like the dramaturgy of me putting together my costume was having, like, the pink triangle in reference to the, you know, the AIDS crisis as part of my costume. And all of that together, it was like this, like, really affirming thing of like, yeah, like, I’m covered in pink. But it’s this reference and this this feeling of being beyond a binary gender, of being, like a divine, angelic version of myself. And I was like, what if I let myself feel that all the time and not just when I’m playing make-believe, which I love? Like obviously, I’ve been a theater person all my life, so yeah. It was a pretty sick experience.

**Tuck:** So if you feel stuck in your gender, try community theater. [crowd laughs]

**AC:** Honestly!

**Tuck:** That is actually, I think, famously, Amy Schneider from Jeopardy, that’s like her origin story, is like community theater.

**AC:** I love that.

**Tuck:** Yeah. It works. Well, we were talking about pink and we actually have an advice question about clothes that I’m going to ask you. But before that, do you want to just talk about like—we talked about the phrase “genderful fashion” last time, five years ago. What does genderful fashion mean to you? Because I feel like when we see a lot of nonbinary…

**AC:** Potato sacks?

**Tuck:** Yeah. Hey, do you all know like the one Instagram for that one shirt, where they’re like, this isn’t a *cisgender* shirt, it’s a *transgender* shirt. And it’s just like, a black T-shirt? And they’re like, but it’s for trans people! Anyway. Are you talking about that? Is that genderful fashion?

**AC:** No! It *can* be if the individual person loves wearing it, but yeah, genderful is beyond gender, beyond the two sections at the store. I think when I started Menswear Self-Care, it was really about you know, coming out as nonbinary and like embracing that I can wear men’s clothes and all of that, and it was.... I feel like I’ve evolved. I keep saying evolved. I feel like my gender is like the thrift store. Like, what is gender at the thrift store? Like, what is gender in the blouses section versus the printed men’s shirts section? Because it’s all a mess in there. And like, that’s how I feel. And I love that. I really just want to wear clothes that make me feel like a young guy. [crowd laughs] And then also like, I’m constantly scouring specifically the XXL like 18 to 20 size in children’s clothes. You know, as a person of petite experience, I can fit into a lot of kids’ clothes and like they make some really good stuff now. But I don’t go down that path of saying that my gender and my clothes are related to children in case the Republicans come looking for me.

**Tuck:** No. Well, I do want to ask you, we’re going to do this full advice segment later, but I have this one that I pulled out for you. It’s this person who’s nonbinary who’s online dating, and it says, “I’m struggling with navigating my gender or lack thereof. I present all over the place—sometimes like a dad at a festive cookout; sometimes like Mx. Frizzle; sometimes like George Harrison.” Those are their three genders. “This is super confusing to people I’m getting to know because they can’t figure out if they’re attracted to me if I’m changing things all the time.” You know, you ever hate it when you go on a date with someone and the next time they’re wearing a different outfit and you’re like, “Disgusting!” Anyway, this person says, “How do I navigate that? Should I tone down my style so that people can clock—” Everyone is like, “No!!!” [crowd laughs] So we’ve established *no*, but like…

**AC:** I think they’ve already answered no. I mean, definitely stop dressing like a dead old Beatle. [silence, then scattered laughter from the crowd] I mean, I don’t know what that—I don’t know—

**Tuck:** George Harrison stans in the crowd!

**AC:** I know. Okay, to be fair, he is my favorite Beatle, but we don’t have time for that. This question sounds like it was written by me like eight and a half years ago, which is really terrifying. But from my experience—first of all, I just want to acknowledge like online dating is hard. Like I am literally constantly telling my wife as I watch my garbage dating shows like I never want to date again. Like I’m so glad I don’t have to do this. Like I can’t watch this. This is so painful. Like second-hand embarrassment, et cetera. And so there is a definitely a very big like kind of, even in queer community in my experience, online dating was like very like femmes are looking for butches, butches are looking for femmes, and I literally had this exact conversation with my friends about like, sometimes I feel more feminine and sometimes like I wanna dress like a little boy. But like, I feel like no one wants that. Like they want something very specific. And in that specific time, eight and a half years ago, I so desperately wanted to be found attractive and wanted to go on dates, et cetera, that I did like kind of try to just like be one thing and I would do one of each, you know. So like I tried to butch it up and date femmes, I tried to like femme it up and you know, date butches.

And then ultimately I was like, first of all, it’s like a drag costume extravaganza before every date and I have to like make myself into this person who I’m not. And I was like, okay, I need to not do that, cause it sucks and it’s breaking my soul. So the maybe difficult answer is be you and wear your clothes and show up at every date the way that you feel best, because the person that is worthy of spending time around you and like being with you is going to accept that and like, if they don’t, they can’t, next. You know? But that’s really hard, because it’s hard to feel like people aren’t seeing you and to feel like, you know, so othered as a gender beyond person. So I just want to acknowledge that like the obvious answer is no, but it’s also, there’s so many factors that come into it. And I know for myself as a Filipino person, as a non-white person, compounded on top of, “Well, if I’m already having a hard time and I feel like, you know, people don’t want to date a person of color, and on top of that, I’m like now going to be this genderful person, like now I need to like stay in this binary so someone will date me,” and that was not the right mindset for me. And so I just offer that story to this person.

**Tuck:** That was very beautiful.

**AC:** Thank you.

**Tuck:** So we’re low on time, but I absolutely cannot leave without discussing—so you were like, what if we talked about Taylor Swift? And I was like AC, how are we going to tie Taylor Swift into this trans podcast and you were like, watch the Lavender Haze video and I did and I’m like “What is happening?!” I don’t know if you’ve seen the Lavender Haze video by Taylor Swift, *directed* by Taylor Swift. But she goes to a party with her trans boyfriend and everyone at the party is trans.

**AC:** Yes.

**Tuck:** And she’s surrounded by lavender haze.

**AC:** Yes.

**Tuck:** And then she does interviews about this song where, again, she’s at an all-trans party and she’s like, “This is about my straight boyfriend Joe.” And like how is this about your straight boyfriend Joe?! So anyway, my question is, what the hell’s going on?

**AC:** That’s my question every day, Tuck, as a as a dedicated Gaylor. Do people know what a Gaylor is? I know you said it earlier. [crowd cheers] Okay. For anyone who doesn’t know, a Gaylor is someone who may or may not believe that Taylor Alison Swift is queer. And I would go into it, but there are actually a number of podcasts that cover this exact topic. If you want to find me at the bar and talk about it later, not my podcast—yet. I’m fascinated with her and you know, I can wear my tin hat and talk about conspiracies, but I dig her music. I love pop music. I’m a pop music girlie. I’ll use girlie, my they/them, they/he girlie, of like, I love her songs that just seeme to always be about yearning and a secret love and trying to hide your relationship from the public, and what’s it like to fall in love with your best friend? Like, I don’t know if we should hold hands. What are the implications of that? And those themes just seem to speak to me for some reason, right? [crowd laughs] But yeah, it was like, it was like Christmas when Laith Ashley showed up in that video. Like he literally announced it, like last Friday, like in the morning, he was like, “Meet me at midnight!” And I was like “Okay.” [Tuck and crowd laugh] And so it was perfect timing. It was a blessing.

**Tuck:** Thank you, Taylor. And our next guest, Taylor Swift. [crowd laughs]

**AC:** Oh my gosh!

**Tuck:** No, I mean, I could talk to you all day, but we do have other guests, so I will instead ask you... the way we always end this little segment of the show is by asking in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**AC:** I don’t have a funny answer for this one because I’ve been thinking a lot about it, and I’ve been thinking a lot about how you can’t make a person change through shaming them and guilt. And so my future of gender that like I wish for all of us is one without shame and without self-hate and self-loathing and where there’s like…it’s so world peace-y, but like with love and acceptance because, yeah, because we’re all worthy of that. [crowd cheers]

**Tuck:** Well, I hope wherever she is, Taylor Swift hears you say that and that’s the little push she needs.

**AC:** I know. I’ll see you all in five years for the update.

**Tuck:** [laughs] All right, well, thank you so much for coming. Everyone put your hands together for AC Dumlao! [crowd cheers]

**AC:** Thank you so much! Thank you!

**Tuck:** Thank you! Beautiful! Yes, curtsy! For our final segment, we do have two frankly iconic guests here to dispense advice. I was telling them that it was giving sort of like Statler and Waldorf energy if one of them was like a beautiful woman and the other one was like a cryptid. And so first up, well, you know them as an editor at The Nib, you know them as a resident of Twitter.com, you know them as the author of the upcoming Boys Weekend, which you can pre-order now, baby. It’s Mattie Lubchansky! Beautiful, Mattie. Before we welcome our second guest out to the stage, I just have to ask, we talked last time, last live show about your book—

**Mattie:** We talk all the time.

**Tuck:** —we talk, we talk like, every day—

**Mattie:** I saw you this morning!

**Tuck:** We talked last live show about your book Boys Weekend, and we’re gonna talk about it again. And the difference, there’s two differences. One is you can pre-order it now and the other one is, I read it and I just thought it was like really brave of you to like, make a book about being trans that’s also good. [crowd laughs] Can you just tell the audience a little bit about the book?

**Mattie:** It’s about a transfem who goes to a bachelor party. Not inspired by any *real things* that happened to anyone who wrote and drew the book.

**Tuck:** The character’s name is not literally, but is in spirit, Smattie Smubchansky. [Tuck and crowd laugh]

**Mattie:** Uh-huh! Well, what’s funny is that I legally, since the last time we talked, I did legally change my name, and the middle name I ended up with is the name of the character!

**Tuck:** Yes, I noticed that they have your middle name! Smattie Smubchansky.

**Mattie:** That’s correct. And then like, there’s like cults and monsters and, like, a libertarian Las Vegas. It’s fun. It’s good. You can go right now to boysweekend.biz.

**Tuck:** Boysweekend.biz. All right. Well, I guess I’ll invite our other guest onto the stage. You know them as, like, a printmaker goblin at Bum Lung. They’re the host of a new podcast we’re going to tell you about. And they’re also the person who is single-handedly responsible for ushering in the age of Be Gay, Do Crime. It is…Io! [crowd cheers; Tuck laughs manically]

**Mattie:** Wow. Wow!

**Io:** Hey, buddies.

**Tuck:** What’s up! Io, can you tell me while I’m pulling up the questions about your new podcast?

**Io:** Yeah, it’s for people who like movies and hate cops. It’s just, it’s called the Anarcho-Geek Power Hour. We’re just going to use talking about video games and nerd bullshit as an excuse to say stuff that will look bad in court later.

**Tuck:** Good. Yeah. And the first guest is Margaret Killjoy, who we know from the podcast Gender Reveal and nothing else! No, also many other things.

**Io:** She’s on her way up.

**Tuck:** All right, well, we have a lot of questions and so I’m going to get—I’m going to get going. Where are we going to start? Right. I’m like, this one will make you mad. This one will make you mad. Okay, we’ll just start here. Why not.

**Mattie:** I was saying before, I yelled a lot last time I was doing advice, and I think this time I’m going to whisper.

**Tuck:** Make sure I can’t hear anything and can’t riff.

**Mattie:** Stage whisper into the microphone.

**Tuck:** Okay, this person says, “I am binary, have completed”—in air quotes—“‘my transition,’ and I’m completely stealth in most areas. How do I signal to other queers that they can rely on me without being out?”

[Mattie grunts]

**Io:** We really do need a signal. And who better to figure it out than these three knuckleheads? [crowd laughs]

**Mattie:** Very, very conspicuously taking some hormones. No, I mean, my first thought hearing that question is... we can tell. We can see each other, like a Spiderman seeing another Spiderman. And then also just be out? I don’t know! If it’s safe for—if it’s safe, if it’s safe. But to other transgenders—it’s just, just say that you’re trans! It’s fun! I don’t know.

**Io:** Are you talking about, like, walking down the street you’re trying to make friends?

**Tuck:** Yeah, I interpreted this as like, I’m on the train.

**Mattie:** Oh. I was thinking like, I conjured an elaborate thing where they’re like, in an office.

**Tuck:** Maybe they’re in an office. I don’t know!

**Mattie:** No, like seeing clients and the client comes in. And it’s me. And they’re like—like buster, I can see right through you. Right?

**Tuck:** Io, I just remembered I was supposed to ask you also about AC’s fashion question, because you had something you wanted to add.

**Io:** Oh yeah, I got a real bone to pick with this question asker. I think in the question they’re like, do I tone down my gender performance so people can tell that I’m nonbinary? What the *fuck* are you talking about? If any of you are trying to codify nonbinary identity, oooh, I’m going to turn into a car and run you over. Trap you in a fucking labyrinth. See how against the binary you are when you face the Minotaur. That’s like, but if I’m on Grimblr and I’m swipin’ around, and I see somebody comes up in their 1920s trousers sprouting like a mighty oak from them, and then I’m swiping and they’re in their David Byrne big suit wearing a wearing a barrel with suspenders, with a very tasteful masculine tiara on, Marge Simpson haircut, I’m like I want to party with this person.

**Tuck:** You wouldn’t be like, “Tone it down, bitch!”?

**Io:** Yeah, if you abandon your freak flag, then you then you abandon all of your countrythems.

**Tuck:** I agree, I agree. Well, this says, “I am a cisgender man, I think. For as long as I can remember...” [everyone laughs]

**Mattie:** Average listener of the Gender Reveal podcast.

**Tuck:** They’re writing in to the Gender Reveal podcast.

**Io:** Yeah, yeah, I’m glad you submitted this question to the transsexual podcast.

**Tuck:** “I am a cisgender man, I think. For as long as I can remember, masculinity and,” air quotes, “‘being a man’ has felt like an exhausting demand placed on me that I never asked for. Still—” [crowd laughs] You’re being very rude to this man! “Still, I’ve inspected my gender identity and try to always check in with myself, and being a man absent necessitating masculinity feels like who I am. I also consciously perform masculinity purely for everyone else. I’m just unsure if my issues are with gender or with masculinity. To what degree should those be conflated?” [silence from the crowd] Yeah, you didn’t know where it was going, huh?

**Io:** I don’t know, you sound okay? You sound like you’ve done the work. Like masculinity and femininity are just nonsense words we give to just gestures and actions and aesthetics anyway. It’s all bullshit, like you’re doing fine, buddy. And like, don’t—I’m not going to bring some SCUM Manifesto stuff to this, to this this nice man—Valerie Solanas was right when she shot Andy Warhol!! [crowd and Tuck laugh] But the book was—yeah, all right, a rare L from attempted murderer. But, sounds fine, bud! Like, you submitted a question to the transsexual podcast and you don’t seem to really be down with masculinity or whatever. I don’t know. Zero in on that a little bit more.

**Mattie:** Yeah, like being a man stinks for a lot of reasons if you are born one, and I could see how it could feel very prison-like. But if you’re thinking about it, that’s important enough. I don’t know. Keep thinking about it and maybe one day you’ll wake up and be like, “Ah, I’ve been listening to the transexual podcast!” [crowd laughs] But you know, maybe you’re cis. It’s fine. It’s *fine* to be cis. It’s fine, it’s fine, right? It’s fine.

**Tuck:** I feel like the question is like, “I hate masculinity. But I’m okay being a man as long as I don’t have to be masculine. Can I do that?” And it’s like, yeah, have you seen literally any faggot? Like that’s like a whole—

**Mattie:** Yeah, I have two thoughts about this. One is there’s no context here in the question of whether or not he is a gay—

**Tuck:** —is gay. Whether he’s gay or not.

**Mattie:** —a gay man, and if he’s gay, then it’s a different set of things. But also, sometimes every group of straight guys has one guy that is a little fruity with it and he rules! So it’s fine. Guy’s a little fruity! It’s awesome. I love having that guy around. You need people for D&D.

**Tuck:** No, that’s true. That’s true. Okay, this person says, “Do you have any thoughts about navigating being nonbinary and transitioning to look like another gender that’s maybe not entirely correct either, but is maybe less painful? I know passing is not a guarantee or goal for everyone, but I think that passing as male is a big reason for me to try testosterone. I could live with this body the way it is now if it didn’t mean everyone, including myself, saw me as a woman. But I worry getting gendered male all the time might eventually become as exhausting and painful as getting gendered female. I think he/him feels better than she/her and I think I want to go on T, but I am still not a boy. I don’t know how to be a boy or to grow up into a man. I don’t want to come out of one closet only to put myself in another. I don’t think I can live the rest of my life as a woman, but I don’t know if I can live the rest of my life as a man either. I’m not either and I don’t want to be. Maybe this question sort of comes down to, ‘How can I be nonbinary in a binary world?’ And I don’t know if anyone has an answer to that, but I’d value your thoughts anyway.”

**Mattie:** Very carefully.

**Io:** Drop out of society. [Tuck and crowd laugh] I mean, when I was on—

**Mattie:** That’s your answer to everything.

**Io:** Yeah, I mean, when I was on HRT for like a year and a half, I decided it wasn’t for me. Also, I kept hopping trains and forgetting them and then selling them for magic beans and like, you’re not going to grow up as a man or a woman if you’re nonbinary, like, chill out, it’s fine. You’ll be okay.

**Mattie:** Like hormones are about making a choice about how you’d like to present, and I will say like I relate very much to this question in terms of where I was at maybe four or five years ago before I was on hormones and yeah, like, if every time you see another person of your assigned gender at birth on the train and you’re doing like the math women meme like, how do I distance myself from this person? Yeah, you probably want to get away from that in some—like this seems like one of those questions, like the fact that you are writing the question into the podcast about it tells me that you just want to start the HRT. And it’s fine! Just do it.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I mean it sounds like there is—and this is, you know, happens a lot. There’s just like a lot of fear that’s like, okay, what if I go on testosterone and then I wake up tomorrow and I’m a man and then I’m like, oops! And that’s just like simply not how it works. But it makes sense that you would think that’s how it works, because all of the fearmongering is like, “What if you do irreversible damage to your one wild and precious body?” And so like of course, if that’s what you hear all the time, you’re going to be like, oh, shit, what if I do irreversible damage, blah blah blah? But like you said, you get to just figure it out in real time, but the other thing is like once you start, you might find out that things that you thought you would hate actually rule, and the reason you thought you’d hate them is because it seemed like a huge leap from where you are now. But you don’t take it as a huge leap! It’s like one little day at a time, baby.

**Mattie:** Yeah, like after I came on the live show last time and I yelled fuck around and find out at every single question, I promised I was not going to do it this time, but I really do think this is a “fuck around and find out” kind of situation. I’m not going to yell it; I’m stage whispering it. [stage whispering] Fuck around. Find out. [normal voice] If you get the big irreversible damage uterus hole, guess what? You can put stuff in there…

**Tuck:** Fill it right in.

**Mattie:** You can do magic tricks with your friends, you can put a basketball in there…perfect place for your basketball.

**Tuck:** Y’all wanna *hoop?* [crowd laughs]

**Mattie:** Who’s ready to *hoop?*

**Tuck:** I added this one cause I felt very strongly about it. “Is it unethical to not tell people, i.e., family and coworkers, that I am on testosterone? I’m considering going on a low dose of T for a few months for some slight voice changes and bottom growth. My family is quite transphobic and I don’t know if they would even notice. I don’t want a lot of changes from T and plan to stop once I get the progress I want. But I worry that they will find out and be upset. I’m also concerned about too many changes that will become obvious before I can stop. Is it bad to gaslight them if they ask why my voice sounds different?” [crowd laughs] “I am not financially dependent on them, but I don’t want to burn bridges.”

**Io:** No, fuck them. [crowd cheers] You’re not financially dependent. Awesome!

**Mattie:** It is *always* okay to lie to a cis person. *Always!*

**Tuck:** I do feel really strongly about this because like, I don’t know, like I don’t know what your relationships are with your whoever and like, maybe I’m the freak here, but like, I don’t go to my mom and I’m like, “Okay, so now I’m on, you know, Claritin and now I’m on Zoloft. Now I’m on finasteride, now I’m on whatever,” you know? Like, I just, especially like this also says “coworkers,” and it’s like, don’t tell your coworkers anything! Don’t tell them your real name if you can get away with it! It’s like, just don’t tell them anything! So no, you absolutely do not need to tell anyone about the medical decisions for your human body, and gaslighting people when they say “Why does your voice sound weird?” and you say it’s just a cold is the transmasculine experience!

**Io:** I got one of those forever colds.

**Tuck:** Just keeps getting worse.

**Mattie:** It’s all the drafts from the big hole in my torso! [crowd laughs]

**Tuck:** Okay. “I recently came out as nonbinary or genderqueer or generally not a woman. My partner is a cis man and when I shared this with him, he asked if he was no longer straight. I told him he could call himself whatever he wanted. I’m still a different gender than him, so in my mind, heterosexual meaning different gender attraction applies to him in particular because he’s not attracted to other men. But I wanted to ask if this is a common issue for nonbinary people coming out while in relationships and what, if any, the trans nonbinary consensus on the matter is—” [crowd laughs] It is so beautiful that you just all laughed at the concept of consensus.

**Mattie:** It’s actually good. Lock the doors, cause we’re actually not leaving until we all get this together.

**Io:** All right. We’re establishing a parliament of gender failures.

**Tuck:** Wait, I want to finish because it actually is—it continues being beautiful. “Like, are all relationships queer once one party is doing the gender transition outside the Western binary tradition, or only some? If so, what is the criteria? Does your partner become queer when you transition?”

**Mattie:** Is your partner queer? Well, that’s the question.

**Tuck:** That’s the question.

**Io:** Let them interrogate that.

**Mattie:** Let them figure that out. You can’t make somebody queer. Like you don’t have a Havana syndrome gun when you come out that makes people queer. Like, maybe *you* do.

**Tuck:** I do.

**Mattie:** You do for sure. Like, you know some people, it is gay to have sex with them no matter what.

**Tuck:** That’s what I strive for personally, yeah.

**Mattie:** Everyone on stage for sure. But like, you need to ask yourself, like is it important to you that you’re in a relationship with a queer person? Does your partner identifying as a straight man make you feel less comfortable with your own identity, whatever? That’s something you have to interrogate and what he has to think about is, is he queer? And sometimes you can be straight and not only have straight relationships. There’s lots of things people…words don’t mean anything, right? I don’t know! It’s all made up!

**Io:** They just made it up!

**Mattie:** They can do that?

**Io:** Yeah. They’ve been doing it since agriculture.

**Mattie:** Reading the dictionary to figure out if my boyfriend is gay. Like I don’t know, it’s not…I just don’t think it’s a useful framing.

**Tuck:** Right. No, I agree. I think we were talking about this earlier today, but it’s just, it’s like, there is no consensus on this. We all laughed, we were like, “hahaha.” But like, the truth is—I just like, demonstrated laughing, you know laughing, when you go “haha”? I mean, that’s the real thing, though, is what you’re saying, is the question is not really, “What label should my boyfriend use?” Because like, that’s between him and god. [crowd laughs] But like, I do think that what you’re saying is true, which is that like, will it bother you? I have found—and this is not about your boyfriend—but I have found that when you’re in a situation like that, it can hold back people’s transition because they’re like, “Well so far, like this amount of nonbinary is okay, but what if I’m like a little bit *too* this and then my straight boyfriend won’t love me anymore?” And so if you’re starting to feel like your boyfriend’s heterosexuality is like holding you back from transitioning, then I would like interrogate that a little bit more, but that’s not really gonna be solved by being like, “He’s queer now.” You know, like.

**Mattie:** I hate to be like, “The answer to your relationship question is clear and open communication.” But you know…have you tried that? [crowd laughs]

**Tuck:** I love the idea of being like, “So is my boyfriend queer?” and we’re like, “You have to go to therapy!” [crowd laughs] Someone is slow clapping and I’m like, is it because you can tell that we need to end? [crowd laughs] All right. We’ll do it for you. Io and Mattie Lubchansky, everybody! [crowd cheers]

**Mattie:** Thank you!

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** That’s going to do it for this week’s show. You can find AC Dumlao on Instagram @mx.acdumlao. You can find Io @bum\_lung and etsy.com/shop/bumlung. Io’s new podcast is called the Anarcho-Geek Power Hour. You can find Mattie on Twitter @lubchansky, you can and frankly must pre-order their graphic novel Boys Weekend. It is out from Pantheon in June and if you can’t afford it, just tell your local library to get it. Even better! But do read this book. I love it so much.

You can find Sabrina Imbler’s segment of this show on our Patreon at patreon.com/gender, where you’ll also find many other bonus episodes and newsletters and other fun things. Plus, you’ll be supporting our show. And you could also of course find AC, Sabrina, and Mattie and Io on previous episodes of this very podcast. You can find us on Instagram and Twitter @gendereveal and at genderpodcast.com, where all of our episode transcripts live. And hey, don’t forget all the announcements from the beginning of the show. Submit merch designs if you want, send us your mutual aid ideas, and send a pitch to our Fast and Furious zine. Why not?

This 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. Special thanks to The Bell House for having us. It was truly such an honor to do a show there and I hope we get to do it again someday.

We’ll be back next week with the last episode of the season, and of course, more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Like I don’t actually want to get rid of any of my clothes at this point, but like, they don’t fit in the dresser and so I was like, okay, maybe if I get rid of some of my, like, really good gay content that I love—content? They’re T-shirts. Why did I say content!?