**Tuck:** Shopping for sex toys can sometimes feel overwhelming or dysphoric, but shopenby.com aims to create a better experience for the queer, trans, and gender nonconforming community. Two percent of all proceeds are donated to organizations focused on improving the lives of queer and trans people of color. And speaking of improving the lives of queer and trans people of color, last week I used my *own* promo code to buy a queer trans person of color on the internet a whip that looks like roses, and you too can do that, and in fact, maybe you should. So visit shopenby.com—that’s shopenby.com—and use the code GenderReveal at checkout to get 10% off and support the show.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

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

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone, I hope you're all hanging in there. This week on the show, I am delighted to share our September 16 Gender Reveal live show. This episode was recorded at Starr Bar in Brooklyn in front of what some would call an irresponsibly packed house, but don't worry, everyone was vaccinated, the audience wore masks, and since we are listening from the future, I can tell you that as far as I heard, nobody got COVID. One person did tell me later that they looked back at the crowd and the exit at one point and was like, “Well, if there's a fire I am going to die here, but at least I'll die surrounded by hot trans people.” And I guess that's all you can ask for from an event.

So this show features three, count ‘em, *three* fabulous guests. We had Food 4 Thot co-host and Electric Lit editor-in-chief Denne Michele Norris, we had Make the Road New York organizer Mateo Guerrero, and cartoonist and Twitter luminary Mattie Lubchansky. This is also a lowkey advice episode in that I made Mattie answer a bunch of listener advice questions for half an hour and I think they nailed it.

So lots to get to today. Let's get right into it. Apologies in advance for *all* of the yelling. I would argue it was a reasonable energy level while I was in the room doing the event, but it is, mmm, three or four times as much energy as is maybe reasonable on a podcast. Jules actually did cut out some of my more unhinged crowd work, which is surely for the best, but if you want to hear that in person, come to our live shows that will happen someday. Unfortunately, we do not have a recording of AC Dumlao's very kind, very funny intro of me that kicked off the show. We were having some technical difficulties, so this recording will pick up right after we got those technical difficulties under control and our SD card started working.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** Give a hand for turning it off and turning it back on again! Thank you so much. Can you make a sound if you're a cisgender individual? Anyone? Pride? Cis pride? Yes, cis pride! And can you make a sound if you were a cis person when you started listening to Gender Reveal and are no longer a cis person? Anyone? Anyone? Yes! Yes! More of you! Oh my god, this is amazing.

All right. We have a great show for you tonight. Thank you so much for coming. Thank you for buying your tickets so promptly, we sold out so fast and clearly it’s chaos. Thank you. Mattie Lubchansky is here—cartoonist at the Nib, general all-star on twitter.com; Mateo Guerrero is here to talk about sex work decrim and queer and trans immigrants’ rights. We like these things! Yes.

But to kick things off, we have a real treat for you. This is someone I wanted on the show for a long time and now we have the perfect excuse because she was just made editor-in-chief of Electric Lit. Yes, yes! She's also co-host of one of my very favorite podcasts, Food 4 Thot. And she's a reader, a writer, a former figure skater and iconic bottom. Welcome to the stage: Denne Michelle Norris!

Come on up. And you could just grab that mic right off the stand. The way we always start is by asking, in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Denne:** Um, I like a variety of terms. I like to say transfemme, because I really like the ambiguity that's there. But I also am just very happy to say that I am a Black trans woman or a woman of trans experience.

**Tuck:** Yeah, so I do want to circle back to that. But first, I want to talk about your job. So congratulations. And—

**Denne:** Thank you. [crowd cheers]

**Tuck:** Yes, yes. You're being billed as the first Black and openly trans editor-in-chief of a major US literary publication. I did have to read it off my phone. [Denne laughs] I'm curious to what extent you in your brain are framing it as a first and to what extent you're like, “I'm a human being doing a job.” How much does that factor in for you?

**Denne:** Well, okay, so, here's the tea. I got the job, and my boss was like, “Alright, we're gonna do a press release and everything,” which they do for any editor-in-chief that they hire. And then their board member and friend of the show Meredith Talusan was like, “Hold up. We're gonna get some real coverage of this, because this is making history because Denne is the first openly transgender Black editor-in-chief of a major literary publication.” It is a mouthful. I don't think I've ever said it myself, either. [Tuck laughs] So I don't think about it all that much and I didn't realize it until Meredith said it and until there was a little bit of press attention around it; it hadn't occurred to me until that point. And so the really great thing about where I work is that I don't feel like I'm being propped up as a transgender prop. There are a lot of trans and nonbinary people on our very small staff, which I think says something as our staff is really small. And it feels really good and healthy. Yeah.

**Tuck:** So I especially love to hear this because, I mean, allegedly, we're in this transgender tipping point, and I am— [Tuck laughs] —yeah.

**Denne:** Allegedly.

**Tuck:** And I feel like in my imagination, that would mean trans people get to write about trans people more, which, eh, has happened, but also cis people have just put our names in their mouth in a way that I don't appreciate. You can look at, you know, the worst example recently of Jesse Single critiquing, or like—yeah, we know what we're talking about! Jesse Singal, famous transphobe cis person Jesse Singal, reviewing the book of another cis transphobe in the New York Times when they could have hired any of hundreds, thousands of trans people to do this. I would love to hear from you. We don’t want to look at that. What should we be looking at instead? Who should we be supporting? What should we be supporting? How do I have hope as a person who's seeing this happen?

**Denne:** Okay, so this is a bit of a tough question, because this is actually something that I'm thinking through a lot at the site. And I may or may not be editing an essay right now written by an author that's talking about the ways in which cisgender writers write about trans people and the ways in which critics then talk about that. There's a lot of conversation around trans people in the literary world and very little of it has trans people at the table. So you're like, 100% correct, first of all; you need to know that.

**Tuck:** Thank you so much. I do. I’m a Leo rising! [Denne and Tuck laugh]

**Denne:** As someone who's in that industry, I can tell you that that is 100% correct. Our stories are being told, more often than not, not by us. That said, there is visibility for trans writers that for a long time there wasn't. I think you had Torrey Peters on the show, who's fantastic; we're in a writing group together; I adore Torrey; Meredith Talusan as well; I'm one. But there's a lot of people who are kind of coming up and a lot of nonfiction work that's being written by trans activists. And so I think that's kind of where to focus on.

But I feel really lucky to be in the job that I'm in and Electric Literature is really, really visible in the literary world. We get about 5.5 million readers a year, which is really exciting. And one of the things that I want to do—I have only been there a month; there's a backlog because they didn't have an editor-in-chief for a few months. So what you're seeing on the site is not everything that it is going to be in the future. But what I will say is that one of the most important things to do is to carve out a space where trans writers get to tell trans stories. That is maybe my number one priority. And I don't know that I realized that it wasn't happening quite as much until I started in the job and I really was like, “Okay, I have to be very cognizant of the landscape,” and I wasn't as cognizant of it before, I was just sort of like in my own space as a writer and person and I, this is something that I was like, “Okay, well, we can't have that. We're talking about Black people telling Black stories. We talk about gay people telling gay stories.” I was like, “There's a huge disconnect.” Cis people—I don't mind cis people…writing about trans—

**Tuck:** Period. [crowd, Denne and Tuck laugh]

**Denne:** I mean, I’m fine with them. Just don't shove that lifestyle down my throat. [crowd laughs and cheers] No, like, I am not totally mad at being included in the writing of a cis person, if they're doing it thoughtfully. But most often they're not, and even if they are, it's not being looked at thoughtfully by a largely cisgender audience. And so the conversations that grow from that representation, are often undermining what a well-meaning cis writer might be trying to do. So it is crucial that trans people get to tell our own stories, and we have to elevate our writers and our books. And we have to find platforms where we can publish our stories, and I think that's part of what I want Electric Lit to become. There's also Them, which I think is a great publication and people should be paying attention to as well.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Well, I'm so excited for next month when you'll have fixed the entire literary sphere! No, thank you so much for what you’re doing.

**Denne:** Four weeks of work!

**Tuck:** Yeah, no, we, we don't expect that from you. Thank you. Okay. Do you want to talk about your gender for a little bit? ‘Cause that's what we do.

**Denne:** Sure.

**Tuck:** We haven't met, but I know from listening to—this is what I know about your childhood, from listening to Food 4 Thot. I know that you were a figure skater.

**Denne:** Yes.

**Tuck:** And I know that you went to an all boys school.

**Denne:** Yes. I talk about these things a lot.

**Tuck:** Yes. How do you feel like either of those things, both of those things, affected the way that you thought about gender and, like, the possibilities for you?

**Denne:** So the interesting thing is that both of those things happened in my life around the same time. I started figure skating really late. I started at 14. It was also when I was 14 that I started at this private all boys school. And so they're really, really integrated because at the school, I did not fit in. And I at that time, I certainly just thought I was a young gay boy. I wasn't out to anyone until I was 16. But I thought that that's what I was, because I had no concept of being transgender. This was in the middle of Ohio. I grew up in a Black Baptist family. Sometimes transgender people were talked about on TV, always in a joking manner. And so I just didn't have a concept of it as a real thing, but I was like, “Okay, I feel like a girl, like I'm such a girl, the boys always tell me that I'm such a girl.” And like, they’re laughing at me, but I used to sort of feel like that's correct and in some ways, I feel sort of seen when they say that, even if they're bullying me, which is maybe really sad, but is the truth.

Anyway, the point is, figure skating represented a bit of a free space because I could embrace my femininity a lot more, even though my skating coach was a gay man, he was of a certain generation. And actually, like, I would come to him and I'd be like, “Oh, I want to skate to the opera Turandot by Puccini” and he was like, “Oh, that's women's music. You can't skate to that.” And sometimes I'd have input on my choreography and he'd be like, “That's too feminine. You can't do that with your wrists or do that with your body.” And, like, at that time, I thought, “Oh, I guess I can't do that.” Now I look back and I think, “Well, he was of a certain generation and that's because expectations of masculinity were put on him, and for him to achieve any kind of respectable life, he felt that he had to embrace all of that, and that's what was around him.” And so I don't blame him for that. But it was just really interesting because my free space, also even there, that was really sort of oppressive to me. And I think it’s part of the reason why it took me as long as it did to fully embrace myself as trans.

I first interacted with the idea that I might be trans when I was 18 years old, when a male friend who did not go to my school, we were talking—I don't remember what I said, we were at the mall, and he was a couple years younger than me, and he was like, “Wait, did you ever consider that you might just be a woman, like you might be a girl trapped in a man's body or you might be trans?” I don't remember the exact language he used. I'm sure he didn't say trans or transgender. This was… a long time ago. [Tuck laughs] But he said that and I thought, “Oh, that's crazy. Like, that's not me. Like, that's not me.” And then for years, the result of that was that for years I would sort of—I would see trans people or I would interact with trans stories—not in the writing world, but just around me—and I would think, I would be very supportive and even sort of be very advocating about it, but in my own head I knew, I was like, “One day that's going to be me.” But I would also say, “No, it's not. No no, no, no, no, it's not.” So it was a real battle for a long time, and I think both of those places had a lot to do with that.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I wanted to ask you, because I've heard you talk a lot about this new transition in a parasocial way just on podcasts. And I've heard you say a lot that you know, you've just started to understand yourself as trans, but I know that before this, you consider yourself nonbinary publicly. And classically, we would say that nonbinary is under the trans umbrella. But of course to some people it feels separate. So can you talk about when you were nonbinary, what your relationship to the word—not, I shouldn’t say when you were nonbinary; that's lazy, but you know what I mean. When you were telling everyone, “What's up, I'm nonbinary,” what was your relationship to the word trans?

**Denne:** I have always considered nonbinary people to be part of the trans community. So let me start by saying that.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Denne’s not getting cancelled here!

**Denne:** However, as a nonbinary person, I didn't want to take up space in a conversation where I maybe shouldn't be taking up space. And so I was always very careful to say I am nonbinary and I didn't necessarily say I am *not* trans, sometimes I would say, “I'm part of the trans community,” but I had a lot of difficulty fully adopting the term “trans” because I didn't feel that I was really transition*ing*, if that makes any sentence. And one of the beautiful things about I think identifying as nonbinary is that you can present in all of these different ways and you can also present in all of these different ways as a trans person, but I do think that the language has different connotations. And so earlier on, I was less interested in transitioning in a really sort of very substantive medical way. And I felt like because of that, nonbinary was the right language for me and that I didn't necessarily own space in a conversation that didn't always apply to me. Right? Like, I've always identified as very femme, I presented fairly femme, but I was like, “I don't know if I have space in the conversation about the lives of Black trans women, if I'm not really living that reality.” And so that's something I was just really thoughtful about for a really long time. But I also just do feel like, now as a trans person who's identifying as trans and telling people I am trans and I'm using that language all the time, when I see people who sort of identify as nonbinary placing themselves under the label of trans, I'm always embracing it because of the freedom that I think it represents.

**Tuck:** Yeah, it's easy to not want to take up space yourself and then once you're in the space, you're like, “Oh, wait, there's actually a lot of space.” This is not a good example—I'm just gesturing to a packed room being like, “There's a lot of space here!” But there’s a lot of space.

**Denne:** What a beautiful packed room, by the way.

**Tuck:** It is.

**Denne:** This is spectacular. I have not been on a stage in front of this many people in a really long time.

**Tuck:** Right.

**Denne:** So shout out to all of you. [crowd claps]

**Tuck:** Well, we don't have too much time left but I wanted to ask: famously you are a woman; famously you date and are attracted to men. Are you a straight person now? And if so, how are you dealing with that emotionally? [crowd laughs]

**Denne:** So I have asked myself that question. [Tuck laughs] And I saw the term on Twitter just, I think, in the last week and I sort of just, begrudgingly, thought, I was like, “I guess this label applies to me, probably, more or less.” And the label was trans het. [crowd laughs]

**Tuck:** Yeah, I guess.

**Denne:** I *guess*. I also kind of don't—and this applies to how I think about writing as well, like I don't really believe in rules. And, first of all, I'm as attracted to trans men as I am to cis men, like I, it’s—

**Tuck:** —that's still straight, baby!

**Denne:** But it’s still straight, right?! But like, I've also been attracted to people who have identified as lesbian who maybe were more butch presenting. So there's a lot of room, because when I think about what I want to go down in the bedroom, there's a lot of ways to make that happen.

**Tuck:** Absolutely.

**Denne:** There's a lot of ways to make that happen. [crowd cheers]

**Tuck:** For the record, I would never call you straight, that's offensive.

**Denne:** I do sort of accept the term trans het, though! I was like, “That's probably right.” And then, you know, men are a national problem. So being attracted to them can be frustrating. [laughs]

**Tuck:** All right. Well, the way we always end each interview is by asking, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Denne:** I can't say that I don't want it to exist, because when I think of that, I feel like that would also erase transness and I'm so excited about transness. But I think to me, the future of gender has very few boundaries and the boundaries that are there are like—when I was in college, in the library, there were these movable stacks like you could move, you could press a button and move these walls and get to different books. And this is—it's very trans of Sarah Lawrence College, and Sarah Lawrence College is a very trans place, so it all makes sense. Anyway, I think that it would be like that. Like, even the boundaries and the lines are kind of imaginary, or they're kind of just gaseous, and you can move right through them because at the end of the day, they are irrelevant to the actual conversation that's happening and the actual lives that people are living, and it's a free space. It's a completely free place.

**Tuck:** When you said free space I thought of when you get to pass go and collect $200, and I'm like, “How can we integrate collecting $200?”

**Denne:** Listen, the *space* is free. Life is not free. Rent still has to be paid!

**Tuck:** Denne Michele Norris, everybody! [crowd cheers]

**Denne:** Thank you!

**Tuck:** All right. Yes, keep it going. When I was staring at how beautiful Denne looked, I realized that I did not look in a mirror before I came up here, so only post pictures if they're cute. Our next guest is the TGNCIQ lead organizer of Make the Road New York. They're a transgender man of color, queer immigrant, and is dedicated to organizing and fighting for immigrants, people who are in the sex trades and TGNCIQ—we're going to talk about that—communities of color. Please welcome Mateo Guerrero!

**Mateo:** Hey!

**Tuck:** So the way we always start: in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Mateo:** Gender! Ah, I don't know. That's a great question. I think I still struggle to define my gender at this moment. I think for a very long time I was nonbinary; now I'm identifying as transmasc, but I feel like, I feel like water. You know, I feel like whatever I feel on that day, whatever vessel that is, that will be my gender for the day.

**Tuck:** I love that. Did you hear everyone go “aw” when you said you're like water? That was cute. [Tuck and Mateo laugh] So you use the acronym TGNCIQ, which I keep having to read off my phone, and I feel like a Republican trying to say “LGBTQ.” I’m like, “What letters are they?” Can you talk about why you choose to use that acronym and what it stands for?

**Mateo:** Yeah. What TGNCIQ stands for is trans, gender nonconforming, intersex, and queer, but also in the umbrella it’s just like genderfluidity and nonbinary. And part of that is how do we put in the front the communities that have been the most impacted by the system? We've seen through the decades change of the letters GLB, LGB, and adding and adjusting, and I think it is essential that right now we continue to center the most impacted communities.

**Tuck:** Absolutely. So we mentioned you’re a lead organizer at Make the Road New York. What kind of work do you do with them?

**Mateo:** Maybe I share a little bit of my background and how I got to do that work.

**Tuck:** Absolutely, please do.

**Mateo:** So I came to United States in 2010 and I was undocumented. And at that time, I was kind of looking for a place where I could find community and I could just share space with other people who were also undocumented. And so one of my friends was like, “Oh, come to Make the Road.” And so I get to the office and one of the things that people were chanting was “undocumented, unafraid.” So we're gonna do that exercise right now. So when I say “undocumented,” you're gonna say “unafraid.” All right? Undocumented!

**Crowd:** Unafraid!

**Mateo:** Undocumented!

**Crowd:** Unafraid!

**Mateo:** I freaked out. I was really nervous. I was like, “Why am I saying this out loud? Why are people saying and yelling that they're undocumented?” But at that point was when I realized that sharing stories is the best way to connect with each other and to create and to build power and community. So I stayed at Make the Road; we organized for the New York State Dream Act; nine years later is when we were able to pass it.

And in that place at Make the Road was the first place where somebody asked for my name. And they asked me, “So what's your name?” And I was like, “Oh, it’s this” and they're like, “No, but like, what's *your* name?” And I was like, “Oh shit, that's a real question.” I was like, “Oh, Mateo,” and they continued to call me Mateo for the longest, genderless at that moment. But it was very special for me. And I started working with a lot of older trans women who guided me in this process. I didn't know any other trans men at that time. And so it was in conversation with trans women that we talked about hormones, we talked about surgeries, we talked about the struggle with policing. And ever since, I stayed at Make the Road. I left for some time to do research, and I've been back for about four years already.

But part of my work is doing city and state policy, but that is rooted in community, right? Like what are the policies in our communities that our folks want to change, right? And so one of the bills that we're fighting for right now is called Stop Violence in the Sex Trades Act. That legislation is to decriminalize sex work in the state of New York. It came from trans women saying “We need to do this for ourselves. We need to do this for future generations. We need to do that for everyone,” right? And so through the Decrim New York coalition, we started drafting this bill in coalition with many other organizations. And so the thing that I do is just kind of facilitate conversations with community members, and how do we strategize and move this campaign forward and make sure that we protect communities now as we're fighting to decriminalize sex work?

**Tuck:** Absolutely. Yeah. So again, coming at this from someone who knows nothing, if I was like, “All right, time to decriminalize sex work,” where do you start with that? Like, what kind of approach are y'all taking and how can folks help?

**Mateo:** Yeah, well, thank you. So first of all, I just want to say that I owe, as a trans person in this world, all the rights that I have today, to the trans women, sex workers who started this fight, right. [crowd cheers]

Yeah, yeah! And so, you know, it is our duty to fight to decriminalize sex work. I think what is important to know is this bill is not the legalization of sex work. When we think about legalizing sex work, something else will become criminal, right? It's like the flip coin. And so if we were to say we are going to legalize sex work, then that means that people will have to go through certain screenings, people will have to apply for licensing, right? And we're talking about undocumented communities who can't access licensing. They're left behind again, right? There are countries that have done some sort of legalization of sex work that have proved to be damaging to undocumented folks, right? And so this is to decriminalize sex work, which means to repeal several codes, and one key thing about that is also that you will delete the prior records of people that have been arrested in the past for sex work, right? So for folks who are undocumented who were sex workers in the past, now they will be able to clear those records and move forward with their lives, whether they want to continue in this industry and apply for citizenship, or they want to leave the industry and apply for a different job and adjust their immigration status. There's also another model that is called the Nordic model, the prohibitionist model, which is another bill that is introduced right now in the state. And I can't remember the name exactly, but it's like “Sex Trade Justice and Equality Act”?

**Tuck:** Sounds right!

**Mateo:** Yeah, you know! [laughs] Honestly, these liberals create the weirdest—[crowd laughs] I think, because, you know, you hear the words “justice” and “equality” and you're like, “I dig that shit, yeah.” But then you dive into it, and that bill—what it does is it supposedly decriminalizes sex work, but it criminalizes clients, right. Like, it loses the point that decriminalizing sex work is an anti-poverty legislation, right, and, yeah, that it's an economic justice issue. And if you're criminalizing clients, well, you're putting people who look like me behind bars, right, who are clients, right? Like, you're putting Black and brown communities behind bars even more, and continuing to surveil sex workers. So what we're pushing is to fully decriminalize sex work, repeal all these nine, you know, codes, vacate the criminal records, and then also make gender neutral—because I don't know if people have read the penal law codes in New York State—

**Tuck:** You know when you're just sitting around reading the penal laws of New York State? Some people raised their hands, yes, I love this, go ahead.

**Mateo:** Yes. But if you’ve looked at them, particularly in 230 article is like, utilizes she/her/hers for sex workers and then utilizes he/him/his for clients. Right? So part of what this bill does is that it also makes it all gender neutral.

**Tuck:** One recent win was the repeal of the Walking While Trans ban, and we did cover that a little bit on the show, but I would love to hear you talk about it as someone who was obviously involved in the campaign.

**Mateo:** Yeah. So we made this very conscious decision in the Decrim New York coalition where we decided to focus first on repealing the Walking While Trans ban. It was a bill that we introduced maybe about five years ago. It didn't really catch on in the beginning, and I think honestly the reason why we were able to repeal this penal code this February is because of the uprisings in the summer. It was because the community really got involved in the issues of abolishing the police, right, and the issues of police abuse. And so we were able to talk about, the actual name for the 240-37 is loitering with intent for prostitution. And we know that the police was only giving that to particularly transgender women in Jackson Heights, like the amount of times that like we have worked with community members that have been arrested for that penal code, or who were just harassed with the lights on and who are being chased by the police, were enormous. So we decided to focus on “Let's make sure that we point out that this is a form of profiling based on gender identity.” And so I think that drawing that connection directly was what led to being able to repeal it today. Not only did they repeal that penal code so that people cannot get arrested for that, but it also seals the records for the people who have gotten those charges in the past. And that's significant for trans community members who are undocumented, who in the past have had those charges, because it will allow them to adjust their immigration status and go through that process without the hassle that it already is to adjust your immigration status.

**Tuck:** Let's do a little clap, that that happened. I’m like, yes! Thank you! [crowd claps]

**Mateo:** I just want to give a huge shoutout because TS Candii was one of the most brilliant person—she was just incredible in leading this campaign, and Jared Trujillo, Jennifer Orellana, Bianey Garcia, and Brian Romero. It was the very first campaign that I worked on that was led by trans people, and that felt incredible. And that's the type of work I want to continue to do. You know?

**Tuck:** Yeah, so obviously these issues all intersect, but you also do work with queer and trans immigrants’ rights, and I would love to hear how you feel that queer and trans immigrants face specific obstacles that straight cis immigrants might not face.

**Mateo:** Yeah, ah, there's so much to share in that. There's a lot of points of contact between the police and trans communities that then makes it harder for immigration-related issues, right? There are trans folks who come into the United States who get detained, and then they enter the process to adjust their immigration status, but for the folx that I work with in Jackson Heights and Bushwick are trans folks that have been here for some time already who might be interacting with the police and getting arrested and then put in detention facilities, right? In New York State and New York City, if you get arrested, ICE doesn't pick you up from the jail, but they do pick you up afterwards.

There was a case of one of our community members. She was near a place where there was an assault. The police thought it was her. She was detained. She was almost deported, but part of the work that we do as a community is then showing up—well, this was pre-pandemic—showing up to the courthouse with many more trans community members, doing the media process, to do petitioning, to make sure that, you know, they're released and being brought back into the community. One thing I want to highlight, though, because some people think that because you're trans, you're able to access asylum or adjust your immigration status—that’s absolutely not true. And also, the United States has this very fucked up thing that is like, “Oh, you know, we're a superior country than any other countries. So we're gonna then adjust your status this way,” which is absolutely not true. There's amazing trans and nonbinary and genderfluid work happening in many of our countries, like in Colombia, there are so many groups doing work, but the United States always tries to invalidate the efforts that are happening in our lands to be able to give status, and also the ways that it does this is like, “Oh, are you trans enough? Yes? Then yes. We’ll adjust your status. Oh, you're not on hormones, oh, you're not really trans, right? Oh, you're not thinking about medically transitioning? Oh, you’re not trans.” So it's like, even when it comes to the immigration aspect and folks who are nonbinary, genderfluid, or trans like and they try to adjust, it’s within whatever the United States considers as valid to do.

**Tuck:** Well, speaking of the United States being *fucked up*, I have a question from our producer in the back, Julia. They asked something smart and so I thought I'd read it in their smart words. It says, “Violence against trans and queer people can be used as an excuse for increased policing or harsher immigration policies, and I'm curious if you think there are different ways to approach the idea of international trans rights that doesn't give this fuel to further US imperialism and police violence, or is it kind of an inevitable thing that certain people will always try to use trans and queer rights as an excuse for increased policing?”

**Mateo:** Thank you. Yeah. You're asking me this question after we've had a weekend of two trans women being assaulted. And what they ask is they ask for resources. They don't ask for “go arrest this person right away,” like, “go increase policing,” what they're asking is “We want resources and we don't want to see the police bothering us in our streets.” And so that constant argument of like, “There is an increase in violence against trans communities, then let’s increase the funding for the police” actually makes no sense. Because what folks are asking is, “Well, I need to pay for rent, right? Like, I got jumped last weekend, and I want to make sure that I'm able to pay for rent so I don’t work for these following two weeks or three weeks until I recover. I want to make sure that I have food on my plate. I don't want to walk outside,” right? “I want to make sure that I have access to therapy,” right? And so it's all these things that are necessary, but I don't know, the system continues to try to justify that policing is necessary.

And we actually have a campaign right now, which is to dismantle the vice units. So the vice units are a branch of the police that quote-unquote, they're like to “rescue people who are being trafficked,” but that's not true—what they do is actually persecute and do raids against sex workers. And we're trying to dismantle those units because they harass our people, right? Like at four in the morning, when some of the trans community members are going home after working the streets and they want to change their clothes to get on the train, and you have the police following them with flashlights on. They don't even let them change their clothes. Right? Or like there is one community member—she had to carry a photo of her marriage certificate on her phone so that when she walked outside with her husband, the police wouldn't be like, “Is that a client?” But the behavior of the police following trans people still continues to happen. Even though folks are not getting arrested for loitering with intent for prostitution, they're still being harassed, big time.

**Tuck:** I have a completely *non sequitur* question for you. So here's my question. You mentioned that you're really into climbing. I'm also really into climbing. Every trans person is really into climbing. Why—[crowd cheers] It's not everyone, I’m sorry, Denne’s like, “No!” Okay, it's transmasc culture and sometimes transfemme culture also. Why do you love it and why do you think we all love it? [crowd laughs]

**Mateo:** You know, so actually, I prefer bouldering more. So climbing and bouldering are a little different. Like, climbing is when you go up a wall and you have a rope; bouldering is when it's shorter walls, but you don't have a harness and you don't have a rope. I actually started bouldering first because I was really self-conscious to put on a harness and climb heights and then people look at me and they're like, “Oh, they don't have a package. They're probably trans.” Right? And I think before when I tried to work out—failed, but when I tried and I went to gyms, you know, I was always really self-conscious. Like in hypermasculine spaces, I was like, “Oh, I'm gonna get beat up, right?” I've been jumped in the past and that's not one thing I want to do, so instead of climbing, I started bouldering so I didn't wear a harness. But now I just have fallen in love with just being able to feel the rocks, to be in nature, to just try different things that feel good for my body. I'm trying to make sure that we bridge BIPOC and trans and nonbinary communities into climbing, because there needs to be more visibility there.

**Tuck:** Well, I should just say I always feel like an alien because I'm a trans person that enjoys being in my body. Do you feel like climbing helps you feel okay about being in the gendered body that you’re in?

**Mateo:** I think right now where I'm at with my gender I feel really well. I feel like after top surgery, I was able to love my body in such a way that it actually allows me to be more free with my queerness because prior to top surgery, I would have never thought about dating other folks besides folks who identified as femme, and so I feel like now that I'm so comfortable in my body, I am much more open with my queerness.

**Tuck:** I love that. [crowd cheers] Yes. Cheering! Wow. The way we always end is by asking in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Mateo:** What I hope is that people can express their gender in the most beautiful way without fearing any sort of retribution from the state or from society. You know, I believe in trans and queer liberation in this lifetime and I believe that because of the trans women that I work with. Yeah, I hope that people can embrace their gender to their fullest without fear.

**Tuck:** I love that. Mateo Guerrero, everybody! [crowd cheers] Coming up next: you know them from thenib.com, you know them from twitter.com, and I don't know if you know them from anything else, but welcome to the stage, Mattie Lubchansky! Hi, thanks for being here! Iiiin terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Mattie:** Uuungh. Uh!

**Tuck:** Yes! [laughs] Someone has to transcribe this!

**Mattie:** Ungh! Em! Um. Blllp! [crowd laughs] I don't know. Like, I think the last time I was on it was very early in my ~*transition*~.

**Tuck:** Yeah, you had just come out, yeah.

**Mattie:** I had just come out! And I don't think, I thought of myself more as like, “Oh, I'm just like nothing,” right? Like I'm just trying to vibe here.

**Tuck:** Vibes only.

**Mattie:** And I think since then, I've thought of myself more as a transfeminine person, and that's been more useful for me. Yeah, there's been some other stuff ~*medically*~, but like, you know, it's just sort of, it’s, I’m in a real sort of, like, ah, fuckin’ don’t ask me about it, like, nonbinary transfemme person is what works for me now. I think I’m having an easier time identifying as like, capital-T Trans, you know, like, it’s good.

**Tuck:** Yeah.Tell me about the book you're writing.

**Mattie:** Oh, it's written already. I'm drawing it now.

**Tuck:** Oh, sorry. Tell me about the book you’re *drawing*.

**Mattie:** It’s fine! It’s uhhhhh...right now the title is Boys’ Weekend and it's about a transfeminine person—*who is not me, legally*—[Tuck and crowd laugh] who is asked to be their friend's best man, then going on a bachelor party weekend to sort of futuristic hell, Las Vegas and international waters. That'll be out from Pantheon in 202...3? Or sometime, whenever I finish it. [Mattie laughs]

**Tuck:** [laughs] If we're all alive.

**Mattie:** I plan on being alive for the book release.

**Tuck:** All right.

**Mattie:** And then after that is sort of like, you know, inshallah. [Tuck laughs] Like, fuck it, it’s fine. [Tuck laughs]

**Tuck:** I have one more question for you. You—

**Mattie:** Mm-hmm.

**Tuck:** —changed your name recently. How's that been going? Because I feel like for me—

**Mattie:** Mm-hmm.

**Tuck:** —I changed my name—you know that if you've listened to the first 75 episodes of Gender Reveal. Please never do that. I mean, it *was* a lot easier than I thought it was going to be. People that I never told, didn't expect to ever tell, just immediately were like, “Hey, I saw that, I fixed that for you.” I'm sorry if I'm bragging if that wasn't your experience. How was it?

**Mattie:** I'm leaving! No, it was weirdly, I will say, I thought, easier than changing my pronouns.

**Tuck:** Yes! So much easier!

**Mattie:** *Frankly.*

**Tuck:** Yes.

**Mattie:** Yeah, it was just sort of like, I don't know, like, I mean, A of all, for me, not a humongous change. It is more, at this point, annoying with, like, changing my email and shit. And like, am I gonna change my credit card? I'm like, ah, it's gonna be a while. The thing about me is I'm very lazy. [crowd laughs] Like, I got like, I do want to do the legal jazz, but I gotta think of a middle name first because who’s got the, buh, blllep, but who’s got the time?

**Tuck:** Yeah. I feel that.

**Mattie:** Not me! I'm busy. I'm writing a book. I just told you about it.

**Tuck:** [laughs] So for the rest of the night, we're going to workshop Mattie’s middle name.

**Mattie:** Yeah, that's right. [crowd laughs]

**Tuck:** So we actually didn't come here to ask you questions. We came here for you to answer questions

**Mattie:** Whaaaaat?!

**Tuck:** —from our listeners.

**Mattie:** First time hearing about this.

**Tuck:** And they fall into three questions, because really y’all only have three questions. And the first one is the “How do I pee?” section. And there's just one question: [dinging sound] “I'm AFAB nonbinary. I came out just before COVID. I'm afraid of re-entering the world and having to navigate gendered restrooms. I've been challenged in women's restrooms before; it's the worst feeling. I am now more masc-presenting than ever, yet I don't feel confident enough in my ability to pass as male to use the men's restroom. I'm having nightmares about bathrooms and often I make excuses not to go places. Any tips on making this horrible, anxiety-inducing situation less shitty?”

**Mattie:** Hachi machi. You know, I have found as a nonbinary person, I find it like—I'm not—I generally tend to, if I’m in a place that only has gendered restrooms, I will go to the men's room because that is the thing I'm still most often mistaken for. It's not a situation where I feel like getting in an argument with somebody when I'm trying to pee. Um, or the other thing you're doing in a bathroom.

**Tuck:** There’s another thing? [crowd laughs]

**Mattie:** Just looking at your phone, yeah. No, I will say to this person that weirdly, I have found men's rooms are very chill. They are *disgusting*. [crowd laughs] But in general, I've never been bothered or yelled at in a men's room in the way that I am terrified of, say, a TERF in the ladies’ room. You know, I've been yelled at by men all the time, everywhere, but never the bathroom because in the bathroom—

**Tuck:** You’re not supposed to perceive each other.

**Mattie:** —they tend to just sort of try to do their business and get out of there. So just like, just keep your head down and go where you want to go.

**Tuck:** I have a men's restroom story. Well, first I want to say that I used this today—there's a website called Refuge Restrooms that I used literally today to be like, “Where can I pee?” and they were like, “Half a block away. You can go to the Target.” And I was like, “Thank god,” and those are all non-gendered restrooms. So that exists.

**Mattie:** That's great. That’s *great*.

**Tuck:** Good tip. But also if you're somewhere that doesn't have a Refuge Restroom situation, I have an anecdote, which is that the last time I was on stage—January 2020—I was playing a show. I was not on testosterone. I was wearing a mesh romper—

**Mattie:** [laughs] Wait, hold on. Wh-wh-wh-wh-wh—

**Tuck:** —and there were only gendered restrooms at the venue, which was like a *very straight venue*. And I was like “Ah!” and just looked at my friend and was like, “Which bathroom should I go in?” and she was like, “Boys’!” and I was like, “Okay,” and I walked in the restroom and it was full; it was packed. And I was trying to head down to make my way to a stall and who should come out of the stall but my friend Edder, and I was so happy to see a friendly face that I went—I don't know if I can still do it—but I was like [squeaky high-pitched voice] “Hi, Edder!” and if you ever wanted to get clocked in a bathroom, you should go [squeaks] *Hi!*—I can't even do it anymore. And it was fine and nobody hate crimed me! So I think that the men's restroom is chill but *disgusting*, as we’ve decided!

**Mattie:** I will also say, as a person of man experience: you see girls in there all the fuckin’ time! [laughs]

**Tuck:** [laughs] Amazing. All right. This is now the “How do I talk to other people?” section. Okay. [dinging sound] “What do you think is the best way of telling new people in your life that you are trans? Not the people you have known forever or family members, but the person you met at a concert and had a good talk with or a friend that you've made in a group exercise class.”

**Mattie:** I am a little demon. [Tuck laughs] So what I think the thing is, what's terrifying is talking to your family or your friends you've known forever. That's hard. What's easy is talking to a fuckin’ stranger and then just dropping very casually in a conversation you're trans and seeing how they react because who cares? I mean, unless, I mean, there's obviously safety concerns at all times, but like, an exercise class—I think the safety concerns are probably low. And I just say drop it in when you're talking about something and if they act weird about it, that’s one person you don’t have to fuckin’ talk to anymore.

**Tuck:** I think you should just pick any sentence and then start with “as a transsexual,” [Mattie laughs] but it could be like, “As a transsexual, I need to use those ten-pound weights.” You know? Like whatever, just like whatever you need, [crowd laughs] but also some—I mean, you don't need to tell anyone and if you do, you can always frame it as like, “Hey, it felt important that I told you this.” And if it doesn't feel important, you don't need to tell them. So. Mm? Mm.

**Mattie:** Exactly.

[dinging sound]

**Tuck:** “How do you navigate ignorant questions since coming out? My family has many questions, many of which I don't feel comfortable answering. I get frustrated and they can tell and they tell me to calm down. I'm not sure—” [crowd makes noise reflecting disapproval of the question asker’s family’s invasiveness] Yeah, boo!

**Mattie:** Boo!

**Tuck:** “—I'm not sure what to do. The obvious question is ‘Tell them to listen to all 100 episodes of Gender Reveal.’”

**Mattie:** That’s right!

**Tuck:** “If they won't do that—”

**Mattie:** —buy them a gift subscription to Gender Reveal. [Tuck laughs]which is where you give them a phone that's got every episode on it. I will say the thing that is good, and is hard, but is *good* is a little thing I like to call my friend, The Boundary. And just, you know, if someone asks you an uncomfortable question, what you can say is, “I'm not comfortable answering that.” And then they will feel bad for doing the bad thing they did and they'll think about it the next time they do it. And if it is a person that tries to make you feel bad about that, you don't keep engaging with that person. There's no reason for you to sit around feeling bad because someone else is an asshole. You can say what you're comfortable saying and say, “I'm not comfortable answering that.” I think this is a totally reasonable thing to do. And to set boundaries with family members who do not get it is completely reasonable and you should be doing it.

**Tuck:** Absolutely! [crowd claps]

**Mattie:** You guys heard of families? [crowd laughs] Mom, if you’re listening to this, I love you very much!

**Tuck:** [laughs] So last question in this section. We maybe don't even need to spend a lot of time on it. Maybe we've covered it. Maybe we haven't. It's [dinging sound] “I always feel scared to talk to anyone about gender stuff, no matter how supportive or close they are. I've been mostly out for about four years and I introduce myself with my new name but rarely with pronouns because I know that I don't look the way I wish I did, and I'm terrified about drawing attention to myself. I want to physically transition but that isn't possible at the moment. So is there a way to get over this or make myself less scared when talking about my gender other than just forcing my way through it?”

**Mattie:** Exposure therapy, baby.

**Tuck:** It is.

**Mattie:** Just do it until it's not hard. Like it sucks that that's the answer, but like, if the whole thing is transing one's gender, as it were, that means there's changes you have to make and it sucks sometimes, but then it feels really good when it doesn't suck so much. Like I just—my advice would be yeah, just force yourself to talk about it until it's easier. Just fake it till you make it. It's all of us, right? Hearing that question is just sort of like, “Ah, that was me, just extremely me, for a long time.” Right? Like, I, yeah.

**Tuck:** I made an award-winning podcast about it rather than talk to anyone individually. So you could try that. [crowd laughs] So our last section, which is the longest section—but then you're all free—[Mattie laughs] is the “What am I?” section. [crowd laughs] ‘Cause people are havin’ some problems. So this first one: [dinging sound] “I'm AFAB nonbinary, and I think I want top surgery but not hormones. I don't want to be masculine or feminine. Do people do this? I don't know a lot of trans people IRL, and everyone I see online seems to be doing both or just hormones.”

**Tuck and Mattie:** Yes!

**Tuck:** Moving on. [chuckles]

**Mattie:** Next question!

[dinging sound]

**Tuck:** “I'm nonbinary; I use they/them pronouns, but was assigned male at birth and came out around two years ago. Although I like being nonbinary, throughout that time I've often thought I'm actually a woman. Some of the time I want to use they/she, sometimes I want to use she/they, sometimes they/them is fine. What confuses me is I don't wear particularly feminine clothes, but I still feel like I want to be more feminine and want people to see me like that. So my question is, what do I do if I'm nonbinary? Because I'm not male, but part of me wants to be more female.

**Mattie:** Fuck around and *find out!!!* [Tuck and crowd laugh] This is why the Lord Hashem invented group chats. [Tuck laughs] Like this what happened with my fucking name, is like, I was real drunk one night and I texted the group chat, “*What if you called me something different?*” And they did and I was like, “That's good” and then I did it. Like it's just, yeah, no, that's...why...you have...friends? You just ask people to do it. And if you don't like it, tell them not to do it anymore. It's just sort of like, find trusted people in your life, people that are very close to you, and ask them to play around with what they're calling you. And it's sort of like, if you don't know the whole picture, right, just sort of plot points on the map. This feels good. This doesn't. This feels good. This doesn't. And then eventually you'll have a picture. It sounds corny, and it is, but who cares? Like, it's just eventually enough things will feel right that you'll have an idea and that never stops ever, but it'll help. Yeah.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I don't want to, like, accidentally answer the next six questions, but it doesn't have to be consistent. Like, you can feel different ways on different days. You can dress different ways on different days. You can also ask people to do things that don't align with the gender that's been assigned to your clothing, because that's *also* fake, right? And so yeah, there's so much space to just play around. I also have tried everything I've ever done out with a group of friends in a group chat before I've, like, taken it public. My name I tried out accidentally ‘cause I thought it was a bit and I was like, “It's real now.” So! [laughs]

**Mattie:** So we've all been there.

**Tuck:** We've all named ourselves after a cheap regional beer.

**Mattie:** It was a good—it was a good bit. And it's a good name.

**Tuck:** Thank you. Okay, [dinging sound] this says “I'm not sure I am trans. I don't really want to be a man, but I feel masc and occasionally want facial hair and different genitals. I am wondering how bad it would be to just kick this can down the road longer and ignore it. Am I going to regret not trying it out now? I'm not certain the way most of my trans friends are. And this one has a sign off—it is ‘Ding Dong Dick. She/her pronouns.’”

**Mattie:** Uhhh...I believe the answer to that question is the same answer to the last question.

**Tuck:** Which is?

**Mattie:** —which is just fuckin’ try it, man—sorry, lady. Try it. Like, just—

**Tuck:** —well, here's a question: when Mattie just said, “Man, I mean lady, sorry,” *which one felt good?*

**Mattie:** That’s a great fuckin’ point!

**Tuck:** If neither felt good, there's a third option! Anyway.

**Mattie:** I said this a long time ago—I'm a coward and I came out in a comic.

**Tuck:** I came out in a podcast, you came out in a comic.

**Mattie:** You know what, it did win an award later. So that’s what happens when you come out—

**Tuck:** We got it. We're two for two.

**Mattie:** We’re two for two.

**Tuck:** Come out in art, you win awards!

**Mattie:** You win awards.

**Tuck:** We’re so *brave!*

**Mattie:** That’s right! But in it, I talked about it was basically about, like, “If you keep thinking about it, that means it's real because if it is real, it is *annoying*.” Like, again, like I said, it's great when it's good, but a lot of it sucks. And if you're thinking about it that much, it is probably real or partially real or there's at least something to it. Your feelings are real, your thoughts are real. Everything else is fake. Like, what you think is real.

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Mattie:** Everything's just—the universe is all what our brain is perceiving it as, right? So it's just, if you’re—

**Tuck:** —how did we get here? [laughs]

**Mattie:** Wanna rap with me? No, it's just if you're thinking about it that much there's something to it. Like, talk to a cis person sometime. I know— [Tuck and crowd laugh]

**Tuck:** Did y'all listen to the cis episodes of Gender Reveal where I was like, “What's your gender” and they're like, “I've never thought of it one time.” You know, it’s like—

**Mattie:** No but like you know, it’s just, yeah, yeah, talk to a cis person sometime—they're just kinda like, “I don't think about it at all!” If you think about it every day all day it's kind of like,

“Mm, I’m thinkin’ about it.”

**Tuck:** Yeah. I mean, but like, to the “am I gonna regret not trying it out now? I’m not certain the way most of my friends are”—one, we all have to pretend to be very, very certain in order to access—yes, we’re all nodding—medical systems, legal systems, like any sort of thing, we have to pretend to be really confident and a lot of us actually aren't that confident and we're just trying it out. And a lot of times, it goes a lot better than we thought it did and we're like actually, “I love this!” And if you don't, it's *totally fine*. You know, like, just try it. But also, if you want to kick the can, kick the can. Will you regret it later? Maybe, but we regret shit all of the time. So you know, like, whatever. Try it out. But I do think that if you try it out now, I don't know. It'll be more plots on the map, as you said, just plotting stuff on the map.

**Mattie:** Yeah, and the thing that I meant to mention was this thing about other people being more sure than you—

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Mattie:** —that is just insanely not true. [laughs]

**Tuck:** [laughs] And even if it is, like, that's *fine!*

**Mattie:** Yeah, like there are people that are insanely sure all the time from the jump, but everybody has that feeling of not feeling queer enough, trans enough, gay enough, whatever the fuck. And it's sort of like “Yeah, we all feel that,” but it's also like, “If everybody feels that, does anybody feel that?”

**Tuck:** Right. I mean, start it in the group chat; if it feels bad, take it away. Like, I've done stuff in a group chat and then taken it back and then started again and then taken it back. Yeah, a lot of people who start hormones are hype, but a lot of people that start hormones are like, “I don't know if I'm going to stick with this, but I'm going to try one shot” and then like, “I'm gonna try two shots” and then it's been ten years!

[dinging sound]

This says, “I am a 30-something cis woman who has a body neutral mindset towards my body. Not body positive, not body negative. My body is just there.” Who can relate? “Lately I started wondering if I should start they pronouns along with she/her as I see this body as simply a body. I don't think about it as a particular gender. I have lived with depression my whole life, though, and I wonder if this sort of disconnecting from labels is more of a sign of that depression or self-hatred. How can I tell if I'm changing my pronouns for the quote-unquote, ‘right reasons’?”

**Mattie:** You can't. [Tuck and crowd laugh]

**Tuck:** There are none.

**Mattie:** Are there right reasons?

**Tuck:** No.

**Mattie:** Is there a gender to a body or is it a gendered thing?

**Tuck:** We all nod, sagely.

**Mattie:** We all nod. Everybody's nodding. But like yeah, if you think this is a thing you want to try and try it, and you'll like it or you won't. It'll be really obvious pretty quickly. I think.

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Mattie:** And if it's not, try shit until something feels nice.

**Tuck:** Just try it out. There's no right reasons; there's not a finite number of they/them pronouns. Like it's not like there's like 25 they/them pronoun badges and once we're out, we're out. You know? Like, you can just do it.

**Mattie:** The strategic reserve is low. [Tuck laughs]

**Tuck:** And then if it feels good, you can keep doing it. And if it feels bad, you can *not* do it, but it's *fine.* Just use whatever pronouns. Just try it. Just try it.

[dinging sound]

Okay. “I am a 19-year-old nonbinary person and I'm confused about my sexuality and attraction. When I was younger I identified as a lesbian, but eventually changed to queer because I felt like it was limiting. Sometimes I feel like I could also like people who are transmasc. However, whenever I meet someone who identifies as a man, it's a hard ‘no.’ I'm so confused because if someone is transmasc and is even transitioning, I'm still attracted, but if they were a trans man, my attraction would be off. It also depends on personal taste. I don't like people who are super big, full beard, big muscles, very low voice. But if I found someone who was like that, but didn't ID as a man I would be more open to dating them than if they did ID as a man. Is it okay that I like people as long as they're anything but a man? Am I being transphobic for feeling this way? I think maybe I'm just still young—” remember, this person is *19 years old*, “—and these questions won't be as pressing in the future.”

**Mattie:** Um, again, like, you're 19. People have preferences for who they are attracted to. And that's okay. You will be attracted to the people you're attracted to. And that's fine. And if you don't have a word for it, we got a big ole word. It's called queer, and you could use that until you got what you got. You know. Yeah, like it's just like, literally fuck around. [crowd laughs] And then literally find out. I don't know.

**Tuck:** I mean, like, I wouldn't say it to someone's face. They're like, “I'm a man.” And you're like, “Get out!” [Mattie and crowd laugh] But you know, like, other than that, like, yeah, it's fine. Everybody has opinions and it can also change over time. I'm a classic story of like, “Straight for boys? Gay for girls? Gay for *boys?*” [Mattie laughs] But like, yeah, just try. It doesn't matter.

**Mattie:** You know, I know so many people who are like, “I'm a lesbian” and they’re married to a man. It’s fine. It happens.

**Tuck:** Yes.

**Mattie:** It's fine. Nobody gives a shit!

**Tuck:** Yes.

**Mattie:** It's all fake, baby.

**Tuck:** Second-to-last question. [dinging sound] “Hi, the last few months I've been coming to terms with being transmasculine. I am not sure if I'm transmasc, nonbinary, or a binary trans man, aside from the fact that figuring out your gender is fucking hard to begin with. It has been extra difficult for me because I realized a lot of cis men make me feel afraid or have a presence that just makes me want to disappear. There are plenty of sweet, good men that I know and encounter through my job, but the creepy toxic masculine men overpower the good men in my mind and make me not want to be a man even at the potential cost of my own happiness. I guess I am wondering: one, is this a terrible thought process to have, and two, how do I not let my being scared of these types of men get in the way of finding my true identity?”

**Mattie:** So I thought this question was interesting. Not so much that I had a great answer, but I was curious what you thought, because this is like *the* transmasc question.

**Tuck:** It is the transmasc question.

**Mattie:** It is like *the* question, right? And my feeling was like, it's just sort of like “your gender is your gender, it is yours. And you make with it what you will” is my thought, but like why—I'm just curious what you—yeah.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I mean, one, this is the transmasc question. So like, you're not alone in this. This is what people are thinking about all the time. We get a bunch of questions that are like this, and I don't have a definitive answer to it yet. Check back next episode. Maybe I'll figure it out. But for me, I'm like, you can just be both. You know, like, I describe myself as nonbinary and a boy in different circumstances and different legal documents. You know, like it's, there's certain situations in which I'm like, “For sure I'm a boy, though.” And then I'm like, “But I'm not that kind of man.” You know, so—just because we're almost done so. [crowd laughs]

So, I think there's a difference between like being a man and being a faggot and like, to me, I feel very comfortable being a faggot, but like not being like a *man.* But also, if someone was like, “You're not a man,” I'd be like, “I’ll fight you!” You know, so like, it's kind of whatever based on the situation, what I'm feeling, who I'm talking to. Like, I want other trans men to see me as one of them. But then I'm like, dating a woman and I'm like, “That's still gay!” You know? So, like, it's whatever. So that's my feeling, is like, you actually don't—for this specific question, because part of it was like, am I nonbinary transmasc or am I a binary trans man? You can be both, it doesn't—the nonbinary-binary binary is also a binary! [laughs]

All right. You ready for the last one?

**Mattie:** Yes.

**Tuck:** Is there ever any finality to questioning gender and orientation?

**Mattie:** [tips head back and hangs microphone dramatically above mouth] *No!*

**Tuck:** Hey, Mattie, what in your future, in the future, what would gender be?

**Mattie:** Oh, Denne and Mateo had such good answers, but I will say: all clothing in *all sizes.*

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yes. Mattie Lubchansky, everybody! [crowd cheers]

**Mattie:** Thank you!

**Tuck:** That's gonna do it. Thank you for Starr Bar for having us. Thank you so much to Mattie and Denne and Mateo for being here. Today's show was produced by Julia Llinas Goodman, who I had *never met before this week*. Give it up for Julia in the back! [crowd cheers]

Thank you to the folks who did our door; thank you to Afi for giving me a mask. Thank you everyone for being here; you're iconic! And thank you for not giving each other COVID. I really appreciate that because I did not want to do a superspreader event and if I did I'm gonna be so mad, so don't do that! Have a great rest of your night. We'll be back real soon with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** As you heard, this episode was produced and edited by Julia Llinas Goodman and by me, Tuck Woodstock. Our logo is by Ira M. Leigh; our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. We will be announcing more tour dates soon, I think? I don't really understand if or when we're going inside again. But in the meantime, if you'd like to support the work we do here, please join us at patreon.com/gender where just $1 a month gets you access to our weekly newsletter.

You can also stay updated by following us on Twitter and Instagram; the show is @gendereveal. I'm also on those websites, as are Denne and Mattie and Mateo, so you can stay in touch with all of us. You can also support Denne by listening to Food 4 Thot and reading Electric Lit. You can support Mattie by joining their Patreon and buying their book Antifa Super Soldier Cookbook, and support Mateo by donating to Make the Road New York. We’ll put all those links in the show notes. That's it for this week, and as you just heard me say, we will be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]