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

[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. Only a few more days left of Pride and then it will be Wrath Month, and I know we're all looking forward to that. I hope you enjoyed last week's two-part career advice spectacular featuring interviews with the authors of my two favorite advice columns, ¡Hola Papi! and Xena, Worrier Princess. Special shoutout to everyone who missed the O in Worrier Princess into last week's episode! You are not alone. Today we are starting another two-part interview series but this time with actual trans people that you know and love. Over the next two weeks we will be checking in with our favorite Gender Reveal alumni power couple, Mal Blum and Gaby Dunn. Today is Mal's turn. And so in this episode we'll be talking about going on T as a professional musician, being read as straight while shopping for couches...

**Mal [voice clip]:** Also, I found out that straight women hate their husbands!

**Tuck:** ...and discovering just how disgusting men's restrooms can be.

**Mal [voice clip]:** That's it. This is disgusting. I'm detransitioning.

**Tuck:** But before we get to that, just a super quick reminder that you can support the work that we do to make the podcast at patreon.com/gender, where just $1 gets you access to our weekly newsletter. Last week, I sent out a four-minute clip of the podcast a day early, so you truly never know what you're going to get. Also, there are only three days left to shop our June merch collection, which includes shirts and stickers that say things like Hot Trans Summer and My Gender Is A Shrug and No Kink At Pride. Just kidding. It says More Kink At Pride. Find everything through June 30 at bit.ly/gendermerch. And now it's time for This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes and hi-hats plays briefly]

**Tuck:** This week I am serving you the content you deserve and giving you a quick countdown of the five most baffling corporate Pride attempts that people showed me on twitter.com. Number five: the brand's name cough syrup Robitussin changed their Twitter avatar to a rainbow background that incorporates a trans flag despite having not tweeted since March.

Number four: Sensodyne toothpaste changed their Twitter avatar to a rainbow background that incorporates the trans flag despite having not tweeted since July 2020. In their defense, Sensodyne does materially help me, a trans person, experience less pain and suffering on a daily basis. So actually, maybe this one is good; I take it back.

Number three, though: Pinkerton, the private police force and detective agency best known for its brutally violent union-busting and strike-breaking tactics, changed its Twitter avatar to a rainbow background [sing-song voice] that incorporates the trans flag.

Number two: the verified Raytheon missiles and defense Twitter account which provides quote, “the industry's most advanced end-to-end solutions to detect, track and engage threats” changed their logo from all red to, in this order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, light pink, light blue, brown, black. That's right. It's the colors of the progress Pride flag, baby! Just sellin’ missiles with a progress Pride flag.

And number one is a tweet that has an image of the word Pride written in rainbow text on a white background, and then text above the image that says, “During #Pride month we recognize our #LGBTQ+ employees, reflect on the trials that their community has endured, and rejoice with them in the triumphs of those who have bravely fought and continue to fight for full equality.” And that tweet is by U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. That's right, ICE Pride! Oh my god, I'm going to die.

This has been a special #Pride edition of This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes and hi-hats plays briefly]

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades in]

**Tuck:** Mal is a musician, and a writer, and sometimes an actor, now, too.

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades out]

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

**Mal:** Oh, wow. You know, it's so funny, I just relistened to the last episode we did and you said that in the intro and somehow still forgot that you were gonna ask that. I was nervous to listen back to it because I was like, “Oh, I probably said so many embarrassing things.” So I had actually never listened to it because I was nervous about it, but it actually isn't as bad as I thought. I sound a lot different. And I think I was really nervous to talk about different things. But I stand by most of what I said, you know, we can have a whole thing at the end where, where I'm just like, “Here's all the reasons in a row why New York City Pride sucks,” and I stand by all of them.

**Tuck:** I'm gonna jump right into this. My producer wanted me to ask you what you thought about NYC Pride banning cops and if you felt like that was a step in the right direction.

**Mal:** Yeah, I think it is a step in the right direction and I think it is directly related to the queer march that started sort of in opposition to heritage of Pride, and was growing in popularity. The short answer, I think it's great. I remain dubious that they will actually do that or make any sort of meaningful change.

**Tuck:** So yeah, we last spoke for the pod like, three years ago. And as I catch up with people who we first spoke to in season one and two, I've been asking the ways that you feel like either the way you think about gender in general has changed or the way you think about your gender has changed. I feel like our voices probably were like little chipmunk voices last time, so that's fun. We can talk about that more, but just in general, how are you thinking about gender these days?

**Mal:** Yeah, it's funny, it is...listening back, it's jarring because I can't believe that it was only three years ago. We both sound very different.

[shimmering transition noise]

**Mal [past voice clip]:** Thanks for bringing the podcast to me.

**Tuck [past voice clip]:** Yeah, it's my first offsite podcast. We’re just in a hotel room, just spinning on a chair, sitting on the floor. That's like a normal thing that podcasters say.

**Mal [past voice clip]:** Do you want me to come down to the floor? I don’t wanna be above you.

**Tuck [past voice clip]:** No, this is great.

**Mal [past voice clip]:** You can totally feel free to sit on one of these beds if you want.

**Tuck [past voice clip]:** It’s fine! I have back support, so it's great.

**Mal [past voice clip]:** Okay. Whatever, whatever you like. [Tuck laughs]

[shimmering transition noise]

**Mal:** We both sound very different. And I sound so...I don’t know how to describe it, but not just young, because you hear that a lot, right, with testosterone, you're like, “I sounded so young.” But I sound small. I could just hear myself making myself smaller in the way that I answer and like the timbre of my voice, you know.

But the way that I have thought about gender. Just listening back last time I said, I identify as a nonbinary transgender person. And at the time, I was like, it's important for me to say both of those things. Because if I just say I'm nonbinary, people don't think that I'm trans. And I will say, I still identify that way. And I use a lot of umbrella terms, right? I feel like a lot of times, we're roundin’ up to try to get people to understand us, but I do use transmasculine as an umbrella term.

Every now and again, I'll say transsexual, but that's mostly just to see how cis people react to it. But I realized that I have to stop doing that, because I'll make a joke. And then—this happened with Gaby’s mom actually the other day, where she kept messing up my pronouns. And then she was like, “I'm so sorry. You know, it's in my heart. But it's, you know, it's like my head, but it's in my heart.” And I was like, “You know, what, all sorts of adventures when you add a new transsexual to the family, am I right?” And then she kind of laughed and looked a little uncomfortable, which is what usually happens, but then she started talking to me, and she back to me was like, “Well, you know, did you see the CNN thing and a lot of transsexual people, blah, blah, blah.” And I was like, “Oh, no, I made it seem like she's allowed to say that and supposed to say that.” And so then I had to be like, “Oh, transgender. Transgender.” So I was like, “Okay, that's why I shouldn't make jokes like that to cis people.”

**Tuck:** You have hit upon this sort of internal debate that exists on and off this show where one of my best friends got me into saying transsexual all the time. And at first I was like, because it's my friend Cass, we have a trans consulting company together. So I was like, “Cass, you have to stop saying transsexual around cis people because then they think it's okay to say transsexual,” but instead the opposite happened. Well, now I just say transsexual to cos people. I was just like, “Ah, sorry, it's too fun. I can't. Never mind, you don't have to stop. I'll just start.”

**Mal:** You know, when it's only fun when they're kind of like, being really, you know, capital L liberal and where they're kind of like being a little, you're like, “This is making me uncomfortable.” But you're not outright saying some things. You're like, “I'm just gonna say this letter back to you and see what you do.” But then you have to be like, “Okay, you're not allowed to say that. Like I was being tongue in cheek.” You know, one time I was on a podcast with—they cut this out of the podcast. It's so funny. One time I was on a podcast with my friend Joseph from Night Vale that was interviewing John Darnielle from The Mountain Goats. John Darnielle said something about, “I'm so excited for the next generation of musicians to replace me” or something. And I said, “Yeah, I can't wait to usurp you and become the transsexual John Darnielle.”

**Tuck:** And they cut it?!

**Mal:** They cut it, I think, because they both didn't know if they were allowed to laugh at it, you know, they both looked so uncomfortable. And I was like, “Oh, I'm kidding. I'm kidding.” But you know, you have to be mindful of, you know, different spaces. [laughs]

One time, me and Audrey, my bandmate, Audrey, we were thinking for a second, like, “Oh, maybe we'll rebrand as a band and we'll have a band name.” And we were playing at this punk label showcase. And the rule of the showcase was you had to open with a joke. And we came out and I was like, “What do you call a bunch of homosexuals?” And it was like, all these straight punk dudes in the audience, you could feel the tension of like, “Uh oh, are we allowed to laugh? Like, what?” And then the punchline was like, “I don't know, I haven't thought of a band name yet.” [laughs] I don't know why that's so fun.

**Tuck:** I just think that cis and straight people make us so uncomfortable all the time that it's a fun thing to actually make them uncomfortable in exchange, because I don't want to be the only person sitting there like, “Oh, no, what is that person going to say?” I want to be the person where they're scared of what I'm going to say also.

**Mal:** [laughs] Yeah, maybe that's what's happening with me on a subconscious level.

**Tuck:** It's fun, it's fun. If you're going to be systemically marginalized, you may as well get a fun bit out of it. You know what I mean?

**Mal:** I love a bit, you know?

**Tuck:** So the main reason I wanted to talk to you, other than that you’re delightful, is that a lot of professional musicians, even just people who sing in the car, in the shower, have avoided going on T because they don't know what it will do to their voice. Danny Lavery has a whole bit in their book and in our interview about this, like, “Ah, I used to have a lovely singing voice, you know that I used to have a lovely singing voice?” and they're like, “It wasn't even that good.” It's just like such a fixation when you start on T to lament what you've lost instead of the things that you're gaining. I'm just curious, you know, as someone who, that is your livelihood, how you thought about it, whether that's something you always knew you wanted to do or whether it surprised you that you were up for this?

**Mal:** Yeah, I think that's such a good framing, is you think about things you lose and never about the things you gain. And I think that's by design, right? We internalize so much transphobia. And it's all like, “Are you sure? Are you sure?” Because if you're not 100% sure, there are certain things that are irreversible and it's drilled into you about surgery, about hormones, it's the worst mistake that you could ever make would be to do something transition-related and regret it, you know, it's a scare tactic. Not to say that, you know, some people go on T, decide it's not for them, go off, go on again. I mean, you know, there's a vast spectrum.

But I will say that I was terrified, really, if I'm honest. And that was for a lot of reasons. A big reason was obviously how I make my living. My livelihood is singing—not *well*, but I'm a singer, you know, I'm a lead singer of a band. I always said, “I'm a good writer, and a good performer, and an okay guitarist, and an adequate singer.” That's kind of how I see myself. So yeah, I was terrified to change that.

I also am somebody who's always just been terrified of change in general, since I was a very, very little kid. And this might actually be partially an ADHD thing. But for example, my parents got a new kitchen table when I was like, seven, and I was emotionally attached to the old kitchen table, I have a meltdown, you know, in the store, when they were picking out a table, which is, you know. And then there's also the aspect of a lot of—I was gonna say, a lot of trans kids, but a lot of kids in general, depending on their household circumstances, I think, don't feel a lot of control over their environments and try to assert that in little ways that don't even make sense to them. And I think feeling like you're not in control of your body, or your gender, is a real destabilizing factor, you know? And if you don't have the words for that, maybe you'll be like, “I need this table. I need you know, my environment can't change,” you know.

So yeah, I've always been averse to change, which is the grand irony of my life, I guess. And then I also have always doubted my own decision-making process, right. So one, I don't like confrontation. So every time I've had to break up with somebody or quit a job I always just would be like, soft breakup, soft quit. Let's get back in touch. When I'm back from touring, we can talk about, or whatever. And then slowly extricate myself. Never just make a decision, right?

**Tuck:** I've seen the Quitting Your Therapist series on TikTok.

**Mal:** [laughs] That was wild! That was wild, because she has been my therapist for seven years. So she knew how indecisive I was, she knew how hard it was for me to make decisions and to assert my needs and my boundaries. And I was like, “Yeah, I want to move on from therapy.” And she was like, “We're gonna need at least a month to process that.” It's wild. It's absolutely wild.

So that and then it actually took me—I started researching top surgery when I was 20, maybe. And like, even was like, I think I would go to this surgeon, which is like, yeah, that's something cis people do. It's like, pick up, pick out their... I was like, I'm not trans. But I think if I was going to get top surgery, I would go to this surgeon. And I did end up getting that surgeon a full decade later, you know, I mean, there's something deeply sad about that to me. But I think you can always feel that way. Right? That's like shoulda, coulda, woulda, but, you know, you're at the point that you're at when you're at that point, whatever.

But all of that was because I was scared that I would regret it, because that's what I swallow, right? I might regret it, I'm not sure. And it was the same with testosterone. Sort of. So basically, my testosterone journey was, I started on a really, really low dose. And I started with the gel, which is a daily application, rather than a week or biweekly injection. And it gave me some illusion of control, right where I was, like, “I'm putting this on every day. And I can just choose not to put it on tomorrow, if I want to,” which is not advisable; you shouldn't do that. But that's how I felt. And it was a very low dose. And so I was like, “Okay, the changes in my voice will be gradual. I can figure it out.”

But basically, what happened is it was very, very, very small imperceptible sort of changes. And then over quarantine, I went up on my dose, and then my voice dropped, it kind of dropped all at once, right? So I was like, “Oh, this big fear, like, it all happened.” And I was, you know, I was like, “Oh, no, what if I can't sing anymore? And especially compounded with like, we haven't been touring? Like, what if I just can't do it anymore?” And then I took a vocal lesson. And she took me through these scales and intervals and stuff. And she was like, “Actually, you have a very large range.” So actually, what happened, you know, you think of it as like, “I lost my ability to sing” or whatever. But what actually happened is, I added a lower range. And it's just relearning how to use that. And sure, maybe you can't sing some of the songs you used to be able to sing. But you can see new songs and they'll sound different. And I think better. I think my voice is changing for the better. But I don't know, maybe some people won't agree with me. But that's none of my business.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I made a joke early on that I had transitioned in order to be able to sing songs by The National on their original octave. And there is that tradeoff of like, a song that I always used to sing along to that I no longer sing along to in the same range. But then at the same time, all of these songs that I could never sing along to without jumping octaves, all the time that I can now sing in their entirety without thinking about it. And that's such a euphoric feeling.

Yeah, I had both a similar and a different experience to you re: voice. I definitely relate to what you're saying of having just mostly added rather than subtracted. At this point, I did completely spiral out at the beginning, when I had this thing, and I wonder if you had it as well, where when my voice was changing really quickly, I just lost all but like five notes. And I just like, as not a professional thing or was spiraling that I would just not be able to sing ever again. So I started taking vocal lessons to be like, “Please, god, help me.” And over time, I realized that, yeah, it wasn't a permanent condition. It was just when your vocal cords are changing very quickly, you just lose a bunch of shit for a while, at least I lost a bunch of shit for a while. So I'm curious if that happened to you at all.

**Mal:** I don't know if I noticed that consciously. I will say, I noticed the squeaking and the cracking. And that really sent me into a panic. But this vocal coach was saying, “Your voice is sort of learning to transition from one note to the other. And like, it's just pathways, you're building them. It's like a muscle.” Which is really funny, because god bless her, she kept trying to avoid using the word transition. And she was like “It, you know it. It, uh.

It changes and it's moving.” And I was like, “Are you trying not to say transition?” And she was like, “Yeah, it transitions.” I was like, “You can say transition, it's okay to say transition!” [laughs] And

she was trying to be so respectful that she was like, “I shouldn't say this.” [laughs]

**Tuck:** The thing is I was never a good singer at any point.

**Mal:** Me neither. Never stopped me. [chuckles]

**Tuck:** But that's the thing. I'm in this band, and so we're playing the same songs and I'm playing a lot of the same chords, but instead of everything being tuned to E, everything's tuned to A? And so yeah, I'm curious, are you dropping songs a full octave? Are you keeping them where they are? Are you retuning? What are you doing?

**Mal:** I'm just writing new songs. [laughs] The old ones, there are some that are more comfortable for me to sing than others, and so, you know, when I've done some online live shows. I've just been doing it. And I assume if and when we ever tour again and need to play old songs that some of them I'll transcribe, some of them I'll keep the same, but maybe just sing a lower melody line. But I haven't had to really revisit that a ton just because I don't have a tour booked right now because, you know, the pandemic. [laughs]

**Tuck:** So when I was learning how to sing, we were working on, you know, head voice and chest voice, and my vocal teacher was like, “Yeah, your head voice just, it sounds fine. But it doesn't sound like you, like it doesn't sound like your personality and your voice.” And I was like, “Yeah, I think my head voice has always made me feel really dysphoric? And so I have always avoided it.” And so getting to sing lower notes was like, “Oh, this is actually like where I want my voice to be because of gender.” And I could strengthen up these higher notes, but I don't ever actually want to sing them because they make me feel bad. Have you ever had a gender association with different parts of your voice like singing or talking or...?

**Mal:** It's funny, I think I lived with a base level of dissociation from what I actually sounded like, because, you know, my head, I sounded like a certain thing. And then other people would compare me to women musicians, and I'd be like, “That's not how I hear it.” But listening back now, even listening back to that other interview we did, I'm like, “I sound—I don't sound like myself.” And it's weird that I sounded like that for so many years. But also, I'm still getting used to my new voice because, you know, it's new. And so I don't really sound like myself now, either. So I'm in this weird middle ground where I'm sort of figuring out, you know, what *do* I sound like? You know, it's been helpful, actually, to be in quarantine and navigating these things, because I can kind of adjust like, for a while I would startle myself, you know? I'd be like, “Oh, it's so *loud*, you know?” Yeah, it's definitely an adjustment. But it's sort of hard to know, because you're with yourself every day, right? It's hard to know, sometimes I'm like, “I don't know what I look like, I don't know what I sound like, I don't know what's changing, what's not changing.” But then when you look back, like with some time passed, you can kind of see and hear. So to answer your question, I don’t know, and maybe ask me again in three years.

**Tuck:** We'll circle back. You mentioned on TikTok that you were starting to be read as a cis guy sometimes. How has that been?

**Mal:** Yeah, that's a wild experience. [laughs]

**Tuck:** Yeah. What have you learned? Some of the first times that I was read as a cis guy, it was like men trying to do misogyny with me. And I was like, “We're not—oh, no. Is that what this is? This is terrible. Such shit.”

**Mal:** [laughs] That's very funny. Well, a few things happen, right? Like we had a plumber come to the house to fix something. And he was asking me to help him with stuff, and was like, “Oh, can you turn the shower on, can you do this, do that?” And I was like, “Oh, he's very friendly.” And you know what? And then like, when he left, he was like, “Thanks, bro.” Like, blah—whatever. And I was like, “Oh, okay, so maybe this guy was a plumber was like, ‘Okay, yeah, you're a dude, and so I can ask you to help me out with some stuff.’” That was the first little thing and I was like, “Interesting, interesting.”

And then on the tip of misogyny, we got a couch. And Gaby makes more money than I do and pay for this couch. And that guy that brought the couch only wanted to talk to me. It's like this thing of them reading Gaby as my girlfriend, which is not even accurate. And then they're reading me as the boyfriend. And they don't want to be disrespectful by, you know, giving Gaby their own agency, you know, is really weird.

Also, I found out that straight women hate their husbands. [Tuck laughs] Did you know this? I didn't know this.

**Tuck:** I did, but tell me about how you learned this.

**Mal:** Well, when we went to buy the couch, there was this woman and she was trying to sell us a couch. And she's being really mean to me! She'd be like, “Okay, so what way is your living room oriented?” And I'd be like, “Oh, I think the door’s over here,” and she'd be like, “Let me talk to someone who knows what they're talking about.” I'd be like, “Whoa, that's mean!” Like, what? But I was just like, “Okay, whatever.” And then she was like, “You guys should get the stain-proofing because you have a dog.” And then she walked ahead with Gaby was like, “I'm saying it's for the dog, but really, it's for him, right?” And Gaby was like,“Oh, right. We hate our husbands because they're disgusting animals.” Like trying to bond. It's just funny. It's funny when the world puts these genders on you that are like really more about them.

And now, I recently started using the men's bathroom. That's terrifying.

**Tuck:** It's so scary. And also so unrewarding because you're like, well, now it's disgusting.

**Mal:** Oh, my God.

**Tuck:** They're so gross.

**Mal:** Why is it so horrible?

**Tuck:** Mal, do you ever think about how—maybe this is different because it's a pandemic. But do you ever think about how washing your hands in the men's bathroom can get you clocked because men don't wash their hands? Because I think about that, which is why family restrooms forever.

**Mal:** That is so funny. Because when I was a little kid—my dad's also germaphobic—he would come back to the dinner table and be like, “You see that guy over there? Didn't wash his hands.” And like, you would sort of tell the other men in the bathroom like, “That one. That one. Didn't wash his hands.” So I knew this from a young age, but I thought it was more of like a 50/50 thing, right? So I was like, I’ve never thought, maybe it'll get me clocked. I was like, maybe they'll just think I'm someone who does that.

I thought though, you know what I thought would get clocked, so to speak. I thought, peeing. I was like, “Maybe my pee stream sounds different.” And I texted my friend who's a trans woman. And I was like, “I'm really nervous they can tell from my pee stream.” And she's like, “They cannot tell from your pee stream.”

Also, we're driving cross-country to see my family for the first time, and this is when I started using men’s bathrooms. And I was looking online to get all these like, you know, STP devices, and I was like, “What am I gonna need this, that,” and I was on the phone with my sister sort of lamenting, “I'm so nervous, and blah blah blah.” And the same person who is trans was like, “I have, I have a suggestion for you. Whenever you're off the phone, like I have a secret that'll help you.” And I was like, “Okay, great.” I got off the phone and I was like, “Okay, what's the secret tip?” And she's like, “There's always a stall.”

**Tuck:** There's *not* always a stall!

**Mal:** Is there not?

**Tuck:** Sometimes there's a stall, but no door on the stall.

**Mal:** Yeah. But I didn't encounter that yet. Maybe because I've been at rest stops. And she's like, “There's always a stall.” And I was like, “Wait, there's always a stall?” And she's like, “You can just pee in the stall.” And I was like, “Okay, great.” So I've only done that. But I was not prepared for how gross—it’s really bad. And no bathroom is great. Right? But it’s just far worse. And I don't understand why. There's nothing anatomical, right, obviously, about why it should be so bad. I think it's just a lack of care.

Or, also, there's so many noises that I was not ready for. You know what I mean? Because, like, you know, there's so many things you don't think about is like gender, but I feel like my whole life, I went into bathrooms and there was like, you know, things happen in a bathroom. That's what bathrooms are for, but there was an element of shame. And you go into the men's room, and it's like, people are just letting it rip. There is just noises and nobody really cares who hears them. But then it's interesting because it's flipped. Because also in the women's room it’s like sometimes you make eye contact, you smile, you talk to each other. And it's like men's room, don’t fuckin’ look at anyone, don’t talk to any—like, it's like different shame, but I don't know, it's just been fascinating. I run in, I run out as fast as I can, sort of.

**Tuck:** [laughs] It's almost like women have been conditioned to be shameful of natural things that their bodies do in a way that men have not.

**Mal:** Yes, precisely.

**Tuck:** Gosh, that was like—the first time I had to pick a gender bathroom post quarantine, because I wasn't using public restrooms during quarantine, but the first time that that happened, I was just like, “Oh my god, I did not miss this at all. This is terrible.” But it was also single stall, which is the easiest, and I just stood there and there was a line for both and I just took the one that had no line fastest. And I was like “My gender is the bathroom of the shortest line.”

**Mal:** That is a new privilege, I would say. They had Pride night in a vaccinated section outdoors at the Dodgers game the other day—it’s like the first time I had gone to an event. I was like, “Okay, men's rooms are disgusting and depress me and I had gone on this road trip and was like, ‘That's it. This is disgusting. I'm detransitioning.’” I would say that when I got back in the car to Gaby, which I'm obviously joking. But then at the Dodgers game, I was like, “Okay, this is the payoff: no line. This is the privilege. I don't have to wait in line for the first time in my life.” And so, okay, I guess that's—I don't know if it's worth it. But my personhood and self esteem is worth it.

**Tuck:** Well, you mentioned Gaby, I have to, for the listeners, talk about this because you were the first Gender Reveal alumni couple. So it was very extra exciting. And at the time Gaby was our token cis guest. No longer, and spoiler for listeners, we *will* talk to them about it separately, but I'm curious if them transitioning—first if you're taking credit for having transed them, but also if you feel like their transition had, your relationship being more T4T, has changed or intensified your relationship or if that's something that you sort of always felt from them.

**Mal:** Interesting question. Yeah, Gaby was your token cis guest and we relistened to that episode and it's so funny because you're like, “Well, how do you know that your cis?” and like they're giving you an answer and you’re so, like, “Oh, okay, interesting,” but they're giving the most trans answers. Like, “how do you know you’re cis?” “Well, I don't know, I guess I *don't* really ever feel like a woman or want to be referred to as a woman or, you know, but I just know that I am because, you know, they tell you that you are” and you're just like, “Okay, moving on.” [Mal and Tuck laugh] They thought it was so funny. You know, sometimes it's like, cis people haven't had to really think about their gender, because it's affirmed everywhere they go, and they never have to think about it because, you know, the world was built for that. And sometimes it's like, you're not trans ‘till you think about your gender, you know what I mean? [laughs] And it's hard to know, what's what, you know, everyone's on their own journey.

But I didn't know, you'd have to ask Gaby how they feel about a lot of it. But I didn't know about Gaby's gender, Gaby didn't know about Gaby's gender. So that wasn't really part of our dynamic at first. And I definitely didn't trans them. But I do think there's something to be said about being attracted to something and not knowing why. Gaby was really fixated on me for a second, and I think there's a reason that we're attracted to certain things, right? And there's lots of different reasons to be attracted to trans people specifically if you're somebody who has that pattern. And one of those reasons is sometimes because of something inside of yourself that you are unpacking, or haven't unpacked yet or whatever.

So yeah, that's to say, I didn't trans Gaby. But perhaps one of the reasons Gaby was drawn to me is because I was trans and they're also figuring some of that stuff out.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Has it been fun to like, hang out with a gender journey? Or is it like, “I get this already?”

**Mal:** If I'm honest, I thought perhaps it would be triggering for me, and I just mean in the sense of, I thought maybe it would bring up all this old stuff that I didn't want to think about or whatever, but honestly, it has nothing to do with me. And that, you know, it's very much their journey and I'm really happy to see where they go, where they end up, where they stop, then, start and stop and start, wherever it takes them. And it helps that I'm super gay in all different directions. But no, it hasn't really affected me personally, except that I used to consider myself a true switch, and in this relationship, I'm like, 100% bottom. [Mal and Tuck laugh] So in that way, it's affected me where it's like, “I'm the bottom in this relationship!”

**Tuck:** You’re just chillin’! Well, is there anything else that we haven't talked about yet that you want to talk about?

**Mal:** Have you already talked about Star Trek being trans?

**Tuck:** Maybe, but let's do it. Talk about Star Trek being trans!

**Mal:** Well, there's one—okay, in TN—I don't mean the original Star Trek. I mean Next Generation on. But the Next Generation, they have a few storylines that really explicitly trans, right? They go to a planet where there is no gender and one of the beings from the planet wants a gender. And so that one's not so great. Well, also, there's all these metaphors, where it's like, there's this robot android guy, and then he creates a child, because Star Trek, you know, and the child—whose name is Lal, actually, which was wild to watch—picks out their own gender.

And then there's the species called Trill. They're basically little worms inside of bodies, and the worms live and go from host to host to host. So they have multiple different genders. So by the time Star Trek gets to Deep Space Nine, there's this one character named Gen Z Addax. And she is Trill, and so has been many different genders. And it's, at the time, was a big deal. She was on a cover of, Transgender—I forget the name of that magazine. And they got a lesbian kiss in, in like ‘97. Anyway, you can read a lot into Star Trek, but I think it's a great—a very rich trans text. I love Star Trek.

Oh, although I haven't watched the new one. But I did audition for, and did not get, a part for some sort of nonbinary heel I know that is coming. Which maybe I wasn't supposed to say that, but I didn't get the part, so who cares?

**Tuck:** [laughs] Like it. Yeah, you said you're sometimes an actor now, too. What have you been doing?

**Mal:** Yeah, well, after, you know, touring shut down, I was like, “What am I gonna do?” And then weirdly, I just booked like a couple things in a row that were outside my field. So I booked a modeling gig and then somebody who's a fan of my music was like, “Do you want to audition for this acting part in this thing?” And I was like, “I'm not really an actor, but okay,” and I auditioned and I got it, and it turned out to be a pilot for HBO Max.

And I was like, “Oh, this is cool.” Like, whatever. And Gaby was like, “You fucking asshole. Like, you don't understand how hard that is; people move out to Hollywood and they try for years to land a fucking network pilot and you just like got one.” And I was like, “Okay, well, if it makes you feel better, I've been clawing, slowly, my way into having a career in music for 15 years, and I feel like everyone hates me and, like, never succeeded in that industry in the eyes of the people who are the powerful gatekeepers.” And so, you know, if a pilot came easy, then let me believe that Hollywood is easy. But yeah, it might not go anywhere, get picked up, you know, these things come and go all the time, apparently. So. But it was cool to, you know, get a job when I was like, “What's my job right now?”

**Tuck:** Yeah, no, that's rad as hell. The way we always end the show is by asking...

**Mal:** —what do I see with gender going?

**Tuck:** Yeah, what do you see with gender going? In your ideal world, what does the future of gender look like?

**Mal:** You know what? Honestly, I have no idea. But a fun answer would be maybe we will all be like, Trill.

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Mal:** Oh, or maybe we'll all be like, Lal. And we'll just pick out our genders every day in the morning. Like, you know, in *Clueless* when she picks out the outfit. No, I honestly have no idea. What do you think? Where do you think gender’s going?

**Tuck:** I don’t know! I felt so like, the kids are our future. And now there's all these like teen gender fascists on Twitter. And I'm like, I don't know anymore.

**Mal:** Yeah. Our last conversation we were like, The Kids Are All Right, the kids are doing good. But you're you're you're sort of swallowing a lot of messages, you know, at all ages, but especially when you're a kid and it's easy for people to take advantage of that and slip you something that is harmful while while it's like you know couched in, pretending it's good for you. So, for example, I used to look at a group when I was 14 on LiveJournal called “Non-Ugly Lesbians.” [Tuck cackles]

**Tuck:** So we all grow.

**Mal:** We all see problematic stuff, and sometimes don’t realize it’s problematic ‘till we’re, you know, a little bit older.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. Okay, but one follow-up question to this because I’m curious about it. What is your ideal future of your gender? Because you’re being read as a cis man sometimes now, but you know, you’re a nonbinary they/them, and so what is the dream for you? Because that’s something I think a lot about as someone who is now a they and he, where I’m like, “Well, this feels right,” but then I see people doing my exact gender who are they/them, and I’m like, “Oh my god, what am I doing? I don’t know; I don’t know anything!”

**Mal:** You know what, I think about adding a “he” in there, sometimes.

**Tuck:** Come on in! [Mal and Tuck laugh]

**Mal:** I think about it. Did you ever read that Leslie Feinberg piece about pronouns being conditional for them? It basically said this thing that, “I process different pronouns differently depending on who they're coming from.” Right? That stuck with me. And I do feel that way sometimes, you know like if someone like you, was to “he” me, I would feel probably good about that because I feel seen by you and other people who sort of get what's going on with me. Whereas, you know, when the guy at the gas station “he”'s me, I feel bad because I'm like—well, it doesn't feel as bad as when I used to get “she”’d, right, like there's levels. But it does feel like I'm like...ooh, I don't know, maybe it's more just being read as straight, because I'm very not straight, and I don't like that. And that's a weird thing too, right, because my whole life, I've never once been able to like, quote-unquote “pass” as straight, and now for the first time, it’s like—can I? People think that? I'm definitely not. Anyway you slice it, I am not straight. Sorry, what was your original question?

**Tuck:** What’s up...with your gender...I think? [Tuck laughs]

**Mal:** Oh yeah. Where's it goin’. I think it's going to...guncle territory, which, I have a baby niece and I think me and Gaby are her guncles, and I don't know. Where's my gender going to go? We will see, and I can't wait to do a follow-up interview in three years, and you're like, “Well, Mal, I didn't see this coming,” and I'll be like, “None of us did.” [Tuck laughs]

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** That's gonna do it for this week's show. If you had a good time or learned something, please share this episode with your community. You can find Mal at @malblum on every social media platform including TikTok—lots of fun TikToks—and at malblum.com. We are on Twitter and Instagram @gendereveal and at genderpodcast.com, where you can find episode transcripts and a real fun FAQ page. Support the work we do to make this podcast every week at patreon.com/gender and shop our limited-edition Pride merch at bit.ly/gendermerch. Remember everything disappears out of the store at the end of the month, so do not ask me in July where this merch went.

Today's show was produced by me, Tuck Woodstock, and edited by Julia Llinas Goodman. Our logo is by Ira M. Leigh, and our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions. We'll be back next week with more feelings about Mal and Gaby. Throw a brick at a cop.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Mal:** The Trill have a tattoo on their neck, and that's how you know they're Trill. What if I just got the Trill tattoo?

**Tuck:** It would be very trans of you.

**Mal:** That'd be extremely trans, right? What's the most trans tattoo?

**Tuck:** My best friend has an Animorphs tattoo and I think that's really fun.

**Mal:** It's really good. I was going to say a seahorse.