

# Them's Wild Season 1, Episode 1

## Transcript

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Parker: It's recording. It's a podcast. Y'all. Okay, I want to welcome everyone to Them's Wild in our very first episode, Them's Wild is the podcast where gender is expansive, justice is necessary, and being too much is exactly enough. So my name is Parker, I use they, she pronouns.

Fiolet: My name is [Fiolet], and I use they, them pronouns.

Chris: My name is Chris, and I use they, them pronouns as well.

Parker: Y'all sound so like, calm.

Okay, so let's talk about the podcast. We are three nonbinary bestie baddies coming together in a world that is literally on fire, but we are burning with this injustice. We – our heartbreak in this world is lighting our fire, and we also have joy, and we are looking forward to possibility.

So here we're talking about things that matter, identity, gender, race, queerness, disable, disability, environmental justice, relationships rage, all the rest, all the topics on Donald Trump's do not talk about list.

And we are here to question binaries and systems of oppression while cracking some jokes, building community and giving you permission to take up all the space that you need. Don't laugh at me, y'all, but let's get wild.

You can laugh. You can laugh.

All right, so, we're gonna kind of – we – it's our first podcast. We have never done a podcast that we've led before. So you all who are listening are getting it really raw right now. We're going to raw dog this podcast.

Chris: That's what they said.

Parker: That's what they said.

Fiolet: That reminds me of something.

Parker: Something you want to say on a podcast?

Fiolet: Maybe.

Parker: What's it remind you of, [Fiolet]?

Fiolet: So it's a meme that somebody sent me, and it was – the caption was like, “watch this gay man not lose his shit during these three people talking about, like, raw dogging.”

Parker: Oh, and they're talking about like a bridge?

Fiolet: They're talking about, like, doggy style. And bareback.

Parker: They're like – they called raw dogging, when they went – they're like, “I went and I didn't have any electronics, and I didn't have like, I wasn't plugged into anything. I was raw dogging life.”

Fiolet: And this guy is just like, going through all the emotions.

Parker: Like, that's what that word means.

Fiolet: Yeah.

Parker: So good.

Fiolet: And wild.

4:34

Parker: You're getting — like I said, let's get some — let's get wild.

Okay, so we're — I have a question though to start us off, and our first question, because we all identify as, you know, some type of nonbinary – how we found the word nonbinary? Or if, or if we use another word, too, right?

And I guess I can start, even though I have nothing at the top of mine right now.

You know, I think that I had been like my the terminology definitely came for me way after I had the feelings around it right way, it just gave me like a new terminology to add to something that I had already been feeling but I would say like, maybe 2015, 2016, is when I first, like, became aware of the term and I had been using like, she/they pronouns at that that time, because I knew about they/them pronouns as being, you know, gender neutral. But I didn't — t was a while before I felt like I could use the term nonbinary about myself. So even though I was aware of it, I was like, “I'm not sure if I fit in to that. Like I know this is what I feel, and maybe I'm like genderqueer or gender fluid or something else,” but my presentation of my gender or gender expression what we're going to get into a little bit later. I felt like I wasn't androgynous enough. I felt like these little — if you're listening, you don't see me gesturing at my chest, but like these, like tatas, were never going to put me in a state of being androgynous enough to fit under this category. And it took me a while to realize that that was a fallacy. I guess I'll stop there and I'm gonna pass it over to who would like to go next.

Fiolet: I can go. That was very great. Thank you for sharing all that. I while you were talking, I was thinking about when I learned of the term nonbinary — I think it was also around 2015, 2016, something like that — but I — it's funny, like the way I came to it, though, because when I was, I mean, we'll get into all this stuff later, but I feel like the term nonbinary came to me to place is almost like liberation within a community that I thought was supposed to be liberated, but like, I felt like I still wasn't able to fully find something that described me in the alphabet soup of what we all call this rainbow community. And, like, nonbinary, I learned about it, and I was like, I love this because it — it's like anti establishment, it's anti system, it's anti everything that's been prescribed to us. And it just like felt so — it felt like everything.

Chris: Yeah.

Parker: I feel like it's so freeing because, like, I — I constantly feel like folks are trying to put me into a box, yes? And it's like — I know...

Fiolet: I'm not going in your box.

Chris: That's what they said?

Fiolet: I will say — one last comment, though, before — I do want to talk about like more like trans men, trans women gender identities in a little bit. But I think — what I do want to mention before I learned about the term nonbinary, and even before I learned about genderqueer, I was like, I don't maybe in my 20s, and like, I was seeing like ze and zem pronouns and with like “z” or “x” and things like that. And I, like, when I first saw that, I remember, like my whole body had a visceral reaction it's, like, “whatever this is all about, feels like it's describing where I'm coming from, or where I'm going,” or something like that, but I also felt like it wasn't mine to use.

Parker: Yeah.

Fiolet: I didn't know whose it was, and I had some — like the moment I saw it, and felt like it was could be mine, I felt like it belonged to somebody else in the community I was a part of, but I couldn't really name who even I thought that was.

Parker: Yeah.

Fiolet: I just thought it wasn't me for some reason.

Parker: That part, the amount of like, yeah, imposter syndrome.

Fiolet: Yes.

Chris: Yes!

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: Yeah. So I went by ze/zem very briefly in my 20s. So I didn't know about nonbinary identity yet. I was still, like, thinking I was a trans man at that point, but I tried the ze/zem pronouns, and literally, no one would use them. And I got a lot of people, like, laughing in my face, including, like, people that I valued really highly at the time. And so I just kind of like, gave up on it. I was like, Yeah, whatever. And then I realized where I was it wasn't safe to be out as trans, and so I went back in the closet, but I first heard nonbinary... Hmm, that must — yeah, I think it's 2015 as well. And I don't know where I heard it. I just knew immediately that that was it. Yeah, like, I and this will come up later, but like, for me, like non gendering was the goal, like the whole time.

Parker: Yep.

Chris: But because I had been treated as woman my whole life, I thought that trans man was like the way I was going to get out of that, even though I still wanted my presentation to be androgynous. I am that androgynous blob person because that's how I feel good.

So, yeah, I don't know when I heard it, but I just knew that — like, immediately it was like, “yep, that's the one.”

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: I was like, this has been a journey for 20 some years of figuring out what in the world is my gender, and like hearing that, I was like, “That's it.”

Fiolet: Yes.

Chris: Whatever that is, that's it.

Parker: I love that, and I love that you were able to like come to it and know that that was it. Because I feel like I spent so long just being like, “No,” you know, like I was like that, and like, “I feel this,” I was using she/they pronouns. And then, like, there was a time when I, like, start, I stopped and went to just she/her pronouns. Because, like, I — it was when I first got into Colorado and had my vice president job and was not out, and was feeling like, “goodness, I am riding on a lot of privilege,” a lot of — that people are assuming you know that I am in a heterosexual, non-queer relationship, you know, and people assuming these things about me. And I was like, “Well, you know, am I going to push this or am I going to just like,” I don't — also don't want to, while I'm riding on this privilege, take from a community that I didn't feel like I was fully integrated into, you know. Like I had queer friends that I just never talked about my sexuality with, like I was always like, “I'm down with the queer homies,” you know. Meanwhile, me and my partner were doing our own thing, but not open about it, because I also had so much fear, you know. Now you can't shut me up.

I had a lot of fear.

12:21

Parker: So anyway, okay, so the next question is, what does nonbinary identity look like for us personally? And like, this is such a big question for me, like, because it's been a journey, you know. Like, I identify as a nonbinary femme, and I use they/she pronouns. And I think that that throws some people, you know, like, I get people who are like, well, which is it? What do you want us to call you? You know, it's one or the other. And, you know, I'm like, Oh, I'll say they, I'll say they/them, and then they don't do it.

And honestly, you know, I'm fine with it, though, with people. Because I'm not I'm done really trying to make people comfortable.

Fiolet: Yeah.

Parker: But I also, but I'm trying to make myself the most comfortable. So, you know, I use both pronouns because I'm not interested in constantly policing how people talk about me or see me. Like, I feel like I'm Black, I'm femme, I'm fat, I'm pansexual, and I already have so much to explain in the world — why I exist, why I take up

this space, why am I all of these things, why I don't just shrink myself — to make room for, for someone else's fragility.

Fiolet: Yeah.

Parker: So when it comes to pronouns, I tell people what they are, and if they get them right, great. If not, I'm not spending my time or my whole day correcting them, and I feel like it gives me a level of understanding about where they're at and how much they're valuing certain parts of my identity. And, you know, it might sound like avoidance, and to be honest, when I think to myself about it, I'm like, "What are my real feelings? Here? Am I avoiding things, right?" But to me, it's also about survival, and it's about choosing where I place my energy in these conversations, right?

When I think about though, how I feel like I've known for a long time, since I was a kid, that the gender story the world handed me didn't quite fit me right. Not because I wasn't feminine, because I feel like in my presentation, and sometimes I do feel deeply feminine. Sometimes I don't, right, but also the definition of femininity that I was given was really narrow and it was whitewashed and it was fragile, and it didn't have space for like a Black femme like me, right? And all the examples of womanhood in media and books and classrooms, they were white women and they were thin and they were quiet and I was not, right.

And so like American society, I feel like, taught me early on that femininity, at least the kind that was praised and protected, and all of these things, belong to white women, right? And as a Black child, I never felt like I fit that mold, even though sometimes I was like, desperate to try. You know.

I went through my phase of like, color contacts and like trying to like, change my looks, because that, like, how I looked naturally I was always told was not the — what beauty was, and the images never reflected me, and it didn't leave room for like, how I was showing up in places. And like, even as a kid, like my like, daydreams, like, when I imagine like love or sex or existing in a body, I also never saw myself as one thing. Like I imagined myself as both and — or something in between and like, I was always like, I wanted both sides of it, and felt like, "Why? Why are we limited? Like, why can't we, like, switch it up?"

And I feel like my gender has always been really layered, and it's — gender fluidity is not new, right? It's not a trend. It's, it's not a modern confusion. When I did my anthropology degree and I started looking at like, my ancestors knew what was up, right? Before colonization even came through with it's like rules and rigid sets of like how you needed to be there were gender variances and gender expansiveness, and, you know, sister husbands and third genders and ceremonial roles for people who didn't fit into the binary and whole communities that understood that gender was something that was fluid and not fixed. And that fluidity, I feel like, is not only a part of my current story, but it's a part of my like, ancestors, right? That — and that story is something that colonization stole from us.

Fiolet and Chris: Yeah.

Parker: So like, but that's what when I think about my gender, you know, I think about how we've been made to feel shame about not fitting into a certain box, and how like things, like certain religions have been weaponized against identity and systems have told us that I — or told me that I couldn't be all that I am. And so like, my

gender identity really is about embodying how I feel, truly feel as myself, and then like press pressing back, right? Because we're told "fit into the binary. Be grateful." I'm not fucking grateful.

Fiolet and Chris: Yeah.

Parker: I don't like your binary. I'm wildly uninterested in that box.

Fiolet: Yes.

Parker: Yeah. I'll stop.

Fiolet: Fire.

Parker: Right? Yeah.

Fiolet: Well, do you want to go or...

Chris: Yeah, sure. Well, okay, so I had a lot of thoughts while you're talking.

Fiolet: Yeah. I'm curious to know what you think.

Chris: But I was like — well, what kept popping up for me was, like, the Catholic Church. So I was raised Roman Catholic, which is, I think this is the worst kind. No offense to anyone listening who is Roman Catholic. But as far as like, being very strict about, like, how we show up, like, what is allowed, like, what is appropriate, what is God's vision, and all this other stuff, and it's like so much pressure to put on, especially children — especially children who knew, know that they're "not right." I'm making air — air quotes.

Parker: Yeah. For those listening at home.

Chris: "Right," air quotes. So yeah, I think when I was five, I knew I was different. I didn't know what that meant, but like, that was the first instance that I was like, "No, my name is Chris, and you will never call me by my birth name ever again. And like, I was one of the boys, but not one of the boys. Like, I feel like I took everything to a degree that the boys didn't, if that makes sense. So like I would be the most I don't know, scrubby kid out in, you know, the neighborhood, playing. When it — Well, this was in the, like, 80s and 90s. So I had a rat tail. Yeah, I had a buzz head with a rat tail, all of the karate kids, but mine was longer than theirs. And, like my, my buzz cut was shorter. It was like, I had to be the nth degree, like, over the top. Because gender already was a performance to me.

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: Because, like, I already was, like, "I'm not a girl."

Fiolet and Parker: Yeah.

Chris: "I don't know what I am, but I'm not a girl." So gender was this huge performance, and so I would do whatever it was that, like, tickled my fancy.

Fiolet: Yes.

Chris: For like a year, for a year it was wearing [MC] Hammer pants.

Parker: Yes! Oh, I need pictures!

Chris: I don't know pictures exist! These weren't like normal Hammer pants, either. I had one pair that I would wear religiously, until my mom was like, "No, we gotta wash it." And it was zebra stripes.

Fiolet: Yes.

Parker: Of course, it was.

Chris: Gray and teal.

Fiolet: Yes! Oh my God!

Chris: And it was like, awful, but also —

Parker: That sounds like the best!

Chris: —beautiful in, like, the ugly way, right? So for me, my presentation was always like a game. And then when I was 14 or 15, I can't remember exactly when — my parents were concerned, and like doctors were concerned, because my periods weren't "normal." Again, bunny ears—quote, unquote—normal. And so they put me on estrogen, and this was, like, the start of, like, my nightmare.

So I'm actually wondering if my chromosomes are different because I did not feminize on my own. It took the estrogen to make that happen, but like, over the course of like, a year and a summer, my face feminized. I grew chesticles, like, everything changed, and it was so abrupt for me. And so I kind of don't want to say violent, but it feels violent.

Fiolet: Yeah.

Chris: Like, all of a sudden I look like a different person. People were treating me differently. I was no longer allowed to like, be that rambunctious like kid running around doing, like, harmful things to themselves just to have fun, right? It was expected of me that I would rein it in and be a proper lady and like all this other stuff, and so, like, that was like, the beginning of my gender nightmare. I was like, I no longer looked like myself. Like when I looked in the mirror, I didn't look right. I felt really messed up about it. And then the expectation that I would just change overnight who I was...

So then coming back into like a nonbinary identity for me in my 30s is when I started really like exploring that again. It was kind of like, for me, taking away everything that I had been like—slowly, because it's a process—like pulling away everything that I had been taught about gender, everything that I've been taught about gender expression, everything that I was taught was, like, the right way to do things, and like, coming back to like, who I was before all of that. Which was like, this androgynous, like, weird gremlin kid, you know, wearing whatever tickled my fancy, and like, changing at will, like anytime I wanted to.

And I feel like that's what it is for me now. That's what it looks like for me. Is, like, some mornings I wake up I'm all like I'm a butchy ass butch. I'm gonna wear the butchy ass butch clothes that I've got in my closet. I'm gonna, like, install a bike rack and all these butchy ass —

Parker: The butchiest!

Chris: And other, other days I'm like, “Oh, I'm a cute, like, little —” whatever this is. I'm playing with my bib for those of you...

Parker: Super cute!

Chris: ...these bib overalls that are, like, this beautiful, like, light blue color and like a see-through-ish white shirt. And it's like that felt good today.

Fiolet: Yes.

Chris: Tomorrow it might be like my boy shorts and a tank top, I don't know. But so, like, every day is like an opportunity to decide, like, “how do I feel today?” Check in with myself. Like, “what do I want to exude today?”

Fiolet: Yes.

Chris: Like, what would feel good to wear today?

Fiolet: Yes.

Chris: And that's what I do, yeah. And some days it's high femme, actually. Well, high femme, according to me. [laughter] Like, I do have that one, like, what is it — red jumpsuit that I would say qualifies with anyone as high femme. But I think, like everything else, people would be like, “no,” but anyway. And then I have, like, my butchy stuff, which typically just shows a lot of, like, my flat chest and like, my tattoo. But, yeah, it's, it's like every day is an adventure, sort of.

Fiolet: Yeah, wow. You both said such great things.

Parker: And you will say —

Fiolet: It's been impacting what I've been wanting to say. I guess the thing though, that I keep coming back to with all this is so like before — sorry. So, so some of my identities identify as nonbinary, but also gender queer, which I like a little bit more than the term nonbinary. And I, for the longest time, I lived my life thinking I was a cis gay man, and so I have a lot of — so I'll say that, but then like to go back so some of my earliest memories as, like a three-year-old, or like a five-year-old are, like, knowing that I'm a girl and wanting girl toys. And like, when my sister got lipstick for the first time, like I was outraged that I didn't have that same little ceremony, and then I was given, like, oh, “but you can have chapstick.”

Chris: Wait, there was a ceremony?

Parker: For lipstick?

Fiolet: No, like my mom did, like a little thing. For me, it probably felt like a ceremony.

Chris and Parker: Yeah.

Fiolet: Like, watching this happen, I was just kind of like, I remember sitting on the stairs in my grandparents' house being like, like, "Why do you get lipstick?"

Chris: Yeah.

Fiolet: "Just because they think that you're a girl."

Chris and Parker: Yeah.

Fiolet: But you know, and like, so much — and then when I went to school, like, grade school, all the boys and the girls called me Michelle. Like, so, which was—and I write about this a lot in my poems— but like, it's a weird experience when, like, somebody maliciously calls you something and you feel both validated and offended.

Parker: You're like, am I affirmed here?

Fiolet: And like, in those moments, I would cry, and I'd be like, what I can never tell anybody, ever...

Chris: Yeah.

Fiolet: Is that I feel seen, because nobody can ever have that truth. And what I will tell everybody is like, "holy shit. Like these kids are, you know, bullying me, calling me Michelle," and, you know, I'm like, optically, yeah, it's an awful bullying experience. And that was just one part of when it started and like that launched, like, the entire journey in my head of like, "well, I'm not crazy. Like, if everybody can see me, like, maybe I'm not the one who sees me this way."

So, like, and then I went through this whole thing of, like, you know, this little kid who's, like, on a gender confusion, and who's like, "oh, maybe, like, even larger scale, like, maybe when we look at people, we only see what we see. Like, we don't actually see what we think they look like." And I was like, "so maybe I do look like a woman." But, you know, and then, like, as I got older, that transitioned into like, "obviously I can't, like, snap my fingers and become a woman, and God's not doing anything about it. So I'm gonna stop praying, and I'm just gonna realize that I'm a gay boy." And so I was like, that's who I told myself I was. And part of me is a gay boy.

And you know, the other part of my gender journey about how does it look like, personally? Like the thing that I've really spent a lot of time thinking about, and I love words, and like dissecting words, and like the way that every word has its own powerful meaning. And like when words are used incorrectly, it's a big deal, even though nobody thinks so, but those three of us. But so for me, like gender identity and gender expression and gender—my own just gender feelings: like I feel multiple genders, and I've also done a lot of work to become comfortable with this male body that I have. And on one level, I'm okay with that, and I present that, and oftentimes like a more male looking way. And I've been playing day to day basis with like, how I look with that and different clothing options. And some days it is more feminine, some days it's more masculine. But it's become like a blending. And I love, like, I love seeing both. And I love, like I know now that, like, I'm not—I used to say for the longest time that, like, "Oh, I was, I'm a trans woman that, like, missed her chance. And like, had I

been born in the Glee generation, like I'd be living my best life." But like, I don't feel that way anymore, and I had to kind of like grieve that actually, because, you know, in one sense, I had this like future of, of who she was and like the life that she lived, and all these things and in some planes she did. But I also know that I have too many genders inside me to just like, to just like, enter another box, if that makes sense.

And so I feel like every day it's just going to continue being an adventure. And I kind of like that, and I kind of like the fact that more and more people are uncomfortable around me, and I think that makes me happy. It makes me feel visible. I feel represented, and I feel like I'm healing my past selves.

Chris: Yeah.

Fiolet: You know?

Chris: Yeah.

30:23

Parker: Wow, it's so powerful. Oh, goodness.

What you were saying, and we got to go on—actually, this could tie in, okay? Because the next question is, “what is being nonbinary not,” right? And one thing about like, trans identities in general, right? So the idea—so for all you out there, like you've probably heard the term “cis,” you've probably heard the term “trans” in relation to gender, like cisgender, transgender, and before you know, those prefixes are actually Latin prefixes that have been used for a long time in science and other things, but when we apply it to gender, cis means “on the same side as” so someone who is cisgender, their gender identity aligns with the sex that they were medically assigned at birth, and trans means that it is somewhere — it could be opposite or somewhere in between, but it just doesn't align directly with what was, what was put down on the paper after they looked at our genitals.

And so—

Fiolet: I remember the day well.

Parker: So okay, so gender dysphoria, I think, is a, one of the things that folks talk about with trans identities. And I think, I have heard people, even within the community, say that if you don't have gender dysphoria, that you are not really trans, right? And I feel like it's something that I wrestled with a lot when thinking about my own identity and like, well, like, “do I want to change? Like my body? And I know that I feel like these different things, but if like, I'm not ready to go and get like, cosmetic surgery to change the way I look, then am I really not happy with what I was assigned at birth?” Right? And it took me a while to be like, “fuck that.” And it's more complicated than that, because when I really think about my body, it has been a fight my whole life to accept my body because of the like gender dysphoria that was put into me by society saying that I was not whatever, like I was not femme enough, because I wasn't a skinny white woman, because I was too fat, because I was too Black, like I was not deserving of fitting into that perfect whatever thing. And I have fought so hard to like, love my body as a fat person, as a Black person, that I think by the time I started getting to these like, having a greater understanding and being able to put words to the ways that I had already felt, I was like, like, I felt like I fought too hard to accept my body as it is, that I'm not as worried, like, I'm not worried about changing it, like, that's not

an innate feeling. Because I was like, “I have to love this body, even though society tells me I should not,” like, I have to love it as a mean of, means of survival and feeling okay with myself, right? And so I think that that's, you know, within community and out of community, a myth that's out there.

Fiolet: Yeah, that's real.

Parker: Yeah.

Fiolet: I struggled with some of that too. And just — as I mentioned, like, working so hard to fight to love the body I'm in, which already, like, part of me thinking I was a boy with that body, already not living up to what boys were supposed to look like, then not even feeling comfortable within the body of a boy being like, well, “if I have to have this body, it's not even up to par. So, like, I can't have the right gender, then I can't have the right body.” And so, like, I get what you're saying, like, you know, I had privileges that came with having the white skin of this body. And some of what you said just really resonated, because there's similarities with that experience.

And it's almost like, on some level, the body doesn't even matter. Like, to a degree it does to me. And then on days I wake up, there's other days where I'm like, I feel like I need to have surgery. And seven months ago, I was ready to start estrogen tomorrow, which is where I come back to the whole daily adventure thing. And I'm almost like, and I was getting myself worked out to the point of stressful headaches, where I was like, “I need to make a decision on what I want to do with this body.” And I was like, “But why am I pressuring myself to make a decision right now, when I've been pressured my whole life?” Like, maybe I should just chill and put on a different outfit.

[cross talk and laughter]

Sometimes, that's the answer. And I changed four times a day.

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: I had the same kind of, not the same, but like in the same realm, struggle of trying to be okay with the body I was in. Because when I came out as a trans man, when I was 19, I had had a reaction to the estrogen they gave me, and so I developed an autoimmune disorder, and my body would attack itself like anytime it thought that there was a foreign body. And so usually it was my urinary tract, my reproductive tract, both of them were just like getting beat up, real bad. And then my, what is it called? Thyroid, was another target. So that was like a bad reaction to being on estrogen because it wasn't the right hormone. I really do think that, like my, my what is it called? My...

Fiolet: Chromosomes?

Chris: Yeah, that's the one.

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: Karyotype? Karyo— Like, I think if I had a test, it would show something.

Parker: Which is wild, because, you know, a lot of people don't know that intersex people are as common as red headed people, and we're born—and they just they're not, there's like, 40, over 40 different types of intersex identities. They're not doing genetic testing or chromosome—like they they're just like, “oh, it looks like this.” And they don't even worry about it, unless there's some kind of outward appearance that they're like, “oh, that's different than we want to be. So yeah, now we're all for surgery on kids, gender surgery on kids, if you're intersex, and we'll do it without you knowing anything, and without you saying that that's what you want.” you know.

Chris: So my guess is, like that was that I do have different chromosomes. It's like that—I mean, that's not a normal reaction to, like, hormones. So, yeah, when I was 19, they're like, “actually, you can't go on testosterone because your body had this reaction to estrogen. So we don't want, like, mess with any of your hormones.” And so I was like, “fuck, now I got to be okay in this body.” And, like, it was devastating for me, because, like, the, the other thing about those years is, like, all the people that I was romantically interested in were gay men, and all the people who were interested in me were gay men, and so there were like, many crying nights. I'm like, “Oh, I'm in the wrong body.”

[Cross talk]

Like, then we didn't really understand—like, there wasn't that much information about, like, there are ways to have relations. Like, when you have “mismatched” I'm doing bunny ears again, quote, unquote “mismatched parts,” right?

So there was, like this, I would say, like, 20-year period where I was just trying to be okay in this body, until I realized I didn't have to be. Like, but it was, it was one of those things where I don't think I would have gotten there had my uterus not tried to kill me. So, like, I developed, like, a quite problematic uterus. And that was, like, the first time I'd had surgery. Before that, I was like—well, except for broken bone, but I was kind of like, anti surgery. I'm like, “oh, no, you got to take care of your body. It's a temple.” It was like that Catholic—

Fiolet: Yes!

Chris: — conditioning that just kind of stuck.

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: So when I had to have an emergency surgery to get rid of the uterus, and I needed that shit out, then I was like...

Parker: Yeet, yeet!

Chris: Then I was like, “Well, I mean, I'm already working on the temple. Maybe it needs a little more renovation.” And so, like, when the idea of top surgery came around, and, like, I could actually afford to do it, my insurance would accept it. I was like, “fuck yeah, Sign me up. I'm getting my custom designer chest, because the factory settings weren't right.”

Fiolet and Parker: Yes!

Chris: So then I got that, and then yeah, and then got the testosterone. It was like, 22 years after when I wanted to get it, but that's when I started testosterone, and it's been an amazing journey. Because, like—I don't know how graphic we want to get this podcast, but like, they're, like—

Parker [singing]: It's our podcast; as graphic as you want.

Chris: Well, like, you were talking about the dysphoria. So like, one of the things that was like, really big for me, dysphoria wise, is what old Greg would say, is the downstairs mix up. Like for me, that was like, I would rather have a Ken body, like nothing there at all, than what I have now, right? And so that was, like, a big thing growing up of, like, “I hate this, I hate this. I hate having it. I don't want to look at it. It's hard to, like, clean it. I just don't want to touch it,” like, all these things. “I don't want it touched.”

Fiolet: Yeah.

Chris: And then with the testosterone, you start to get bottom growth.

Parker: Yeah?

Chris: And like, in all my dreams, like my sex dreams, specifically, I have a penis. So it's just like one of those things where, like, my body doesn't match what my dreams have.

Fiolet: Yeah.

Chris: It's very, you know, I have one life while I'm asleep, and a different life while I'm awake. And now it's kind of like I have a little something, something growing. You know, it's not exactly a penis, but, you know, it's something.

Parker: I always wanted both, like, I always wish that it like—you like—I don't know, what are the drill bits or I—

[Cross talk]

Fiolet: Change it out.

Parker: You know, change it out.

[Cross talk and laughter]

Parker: You know, “my dreams” in bunny ears were always like, you know, it would switch up, you know, sometimes I was the catcher, sometimes I was a receiver. Wait, is that? No, those are both receivers.

Fiolet: Those are both...

Parker: Sometimes I was the pitcher?

Fiolet: Yeah.

Parker: Sometimes I had the bat, sometimes I had the gloves.

Chris: Why are you doing—

[Cross talk and laughter]

Parker: I don't know why the sports reference, because I don't know what I'm talking about. The catcher and the receive—no, those are both the same things. I don't know sportsing.

Fiolet: Two bottoms.

Parker: Two bottoms. The other myth, right is about the androgyny and like, it's so funny, because people talk about this being, “oh, it's new. Why is everybody doing this these days?” And it's not new, right? And trans identities aren't new, and I like they're freaking like Greek and Roman statues of like women with—lifting up a skirt and having a penis. I don't know I was trying to think of another word. I hope you all are 18 and older, listening. You know, and so—

Chris: I think they've all seen worse.

Fiolet: Yes.

Parker: I think about—what was, what was it? *SNL*, Pat?

Fiolet and Chris: Yeah, Pat.

Parker: If Pat was a man or a woman. And, like—

Fiolet: I hated Pat!

Parker: Right? Well—

Fiolet: I hated the fact that people laughed at Pat.

Parker: Laughed at them, right?

Fiolet: Yeah.

Chris: I loved Pat!

Fiolet, I loved Pat, yeah.

Chris: Pat didn't give a shit.

Fiolet: Representation, yeah. Pat didn't give a shit.

Parker: Pat didn't give a shit.

Chris: And wasn't going to tell you.

Parker: But like, it's like, you have to fit into one, and if you don't, it's, it's like, funny or not, and you have—but now that we're like, people know more about nonbinary identities, if you're not a Pat, right? Like, if you're not, you're not into androg—like, the goal is androgyny, yeah. And like, for me, I don't really feel like the—for me, I know it's for other people. But for me, I don't feel like my goal is androgyny, and I don't feel like it makes me less of a nonbinary person. I feel like my goal is like one, to be true to how I feel, and also to say, “Fuck you” to this system that's like, “oh, okay, you—you an egg and a sperm come together, and now you're either blue or pink in the womb. And then your trajectory of your life is either in this thing or in this thing. And if you're not fitting into it, then it's a societal issue.” Like, and it was like, fuck those boxes. Like, fuck that. Like, I feel like whatever, even if I'm not—I dress, you know, very feminine; even if I'm not, like, fully divorced from this idea of womanhood, it is not a box that fits me at all. I'm so much more; I'm so much more expansive and like, I refuse to be in that. And so I feel like this myth of that you have to be androgynous in order for that identity to be valid for you.

Fiolet: Yes.

Parker: Is a myth.

Chris: Yeah.

Fiolet: Yes! Ooh, I want to speak to that.

Parker: Yes, please.

Fiolet: And I also feel like my concept of what I thought androgyny is or is supposed to look like, is also a myth. Because, like, when I was younger, I would think about, like, androgyny, before we had the term nonbinary, I'd be like, “Oh, well, you know, maybe I'm like, the folks who are, you know, androgynous.” I didn't have that word, you know, but, but like, and I had a concept of what I thought that would look like, and that like, oh—and like, something I didn't want to be associated with because of what people thought about things like Pat and would laugh. And then now, like—well, I guess there are two other things I want to say: the gender dysphoria is real, and, like, some of my earliest dreams as even a kid pre-puberty, are like about my vagina. So, I mean, so there's that, but then there's the fact of like, in my 40s, I love putting on a dress that feels silky, and feeling it over, like my hairy legs and my crotch, and like feeling the cross dresserness of it all. And like, to me, that feels really liberating. And I love—like, I find beauty in the gender fuck of my own experience.

Parker and Chris: Yes!

Fiolet: And like, and even if, like, even if, like, Juan and everybody would tell me, like, “Oh, you look really ugly today.” If I felt like, really cute, it wouldn't even matter. Like, it would not even matter. I could be walking on the street and everyone'd be like, “you look fucking disgusting.” If I felt amazing—and there are those days—like I'm living! What else do I need? Like, try and stop me.

Parker: And I think that that also is something that society wants to push back on, because it doesn't want—they don't want you to feel good about yourself if they don't approve—

Fiolet: Yes! Or understand.

Parker: Or understand it, right? So, like—

Chris: Mostly they want to know how to market to you.

Parker and Fiolet: Yeah!

Fiolet: And it's usually under a weird sexual vibe, of like, even if they're not thinking this way, of like, “well, is this something that I would put into a sex category, or is it something I would not.”

Parker and Chris: Yeah.

Fiolet: I'm specifically thinking about straight men. Like, that's how they're thinking!

Parker: Yep. Yeah.

Fiolet: Which has made, which is really interesting when you're out there flirting with people.

Chris: Yeah. So like, even as someone whose goal is androgyny, I feel like that myth put me in a box as well, because, like, before I got top surgery, I was very careful about not wearing anything femme. Like, even the things that I really wanted, like the silky stuff! That is some texture that you have to have on your skin!

Fiolet: It's an experience!

Chris: Yes! And, like, I wouldn't allow myself to have it, because I was like, “someone's gonna see that, and they're gonna think that my identity isn't real...”

Fiolet and Parker: Yep.

Chris: “And I need them to believe that my identity is real, so I'm gonna avoid that.”

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: And so, like, for a good I don't—six, seven years, all I wore were, like, oversized, like sweatshirts to hide my chest, until I got top surgery, which is hella warm. That is totally not what you want to be doing. And then, like, when binders became readily available. So like, early in my transition—well, back when I was 19, I wouldn't call my transition, because I did go back in the closet. But like early days, I did the, what you call it? The ace bandage, and really hurt myself, actually, by wearing it too long, by not, like putting it on properly. And so, like in my 30s, when they started making binders, like more readily available, then I started wearing those. But again, like summer, oh my god! Like, you want the most like dysphoric feeling in the world, it's under boob sweat in a binder. And then one time it was so sweaty and like my—the rest of my body, like, what is it called? Like, why are words hard today?

Parker: You're doing great.

Chris: Not inflammation, but like, like, where it expands? It's bigger.

Fiolet: Swole.

Chris: Yes! I don't know why that was hard.

Parker: Swole.

Chris: Like, my like, every part of my body got swollen because of how warm it actually was with the binder on and I couldn't get the binder off. Like, this total panic moment of like, "oh my god, I'm stuck with this binder. It's not healthy. I've been in it for too long" because they recommend not doing it more than eight hours a day, but I had gone to Pride and, like, with it on. And so I've been out in the sun with it on, and like, my body was too swollen to get off. And so I had to ask my now ex to help me out. It was like, this battle of like pulling, screeching, and like, finally getting it off, and like, just everything, being super irritated and sweaty underneath. I don't know why I told you all that.

Parker: No! Because we're getting real up in here!

[Cross talk]

50:16

Parker: I think this goes good into our next question about gender expression. How does gender expression play into or doesn't play into our identity, and like, you know, gender expression—so there's like, your gender identity—how you feel on the inside—and your gender expression is how you show to the world different cues about your gender, or so they say.

And you know, my gender expression is really femme now, but that was like a change for me, like. So, you know, I was born in New York. My parents moved down to South Georgia, like around the time I was going into high school or ending middle school. And I, you know, was thrust into this new community that was very—the race dynamics were really oppressive. I did a teenage rebellion thing where—my poor parents, who were, like, really kind of liberal, pretty open-minded, agnostic folks, I was like, "I'm going to join a Pentecostal church, that's going to show them." I don't know, somebody invited me. And I just like, there wasn't much to do in that town. So ended up going to church. And like, I was at church, going to church, I was dressing very masc—like trucker hats. You know, I had, like my gear was kind of like Joey Lawrence in *Blossom*.

Fiolet: Yes!

Parker: Like, I'd wear, like the white t shirt with, like, the open unbuttoned, like, button up shirt.

Fiolet: Yeah!

Parker: And like, or sometimes, like, around my waist with my baggy jeans and my combat boots and my trucker hat. And, you know, whatever, I was going to church, and I was kissing girls in secret. You know, on the side then going and like, repenting, "Oh God."

Fiolet: "Oh God!"

Parker: "Oh God, please forgive me." And, okay, sorry, this is making it so long. But like, also, I would have had supportive parents, which is the kicker, because my mom took me one day to eat at a Hardee's in town; not a

whole lot of restaurants in that town. And she sat me down, and she's like, "I want you to know, you know, if you are a lesbian, me and your dad fully support you." And I was like, "No, Mom, that's against God! No way!"

That's how, like, deep in it I was.

Fiolet: Yeah.

Parker: But I had this, like, very masculine presentation, and then I had had during high school, this experience of other than, like, smooching girls in secret that there was—I didn't really have romantic prospects, you know, because the town—small town, South Georgia, highly religious, very racist. I was going to an all white church. The pastor wanted to integrate, and they tried, but I experienced a lot of racial trauma there. But a lot of people believe like, you don't mix racially, right? And there was one person in our church who had—had—she had a biracial son, they always talked about him like he was like a mistake, because she sinned and went off with this Black guy, you know. And so I went through my high school not feeling that people saw me as attractive. Felt like, you know, because like I was like, I was in these white spaces, but was always like, "No, you stay away from them." You know, I built up these like feelings about myself, and then I had, like, feeling like I just wasn't enough as a person to be desirable. And when I got into college, like, I switched from that very masc presentation and started going like, ultra femme. And saw, like, a change in some of the ways that people treated me, and I was like, and "that, like, girl kissing thing that's behind me." I'm like, "I'm straight and I'm femme" and like, just, like, develop this, like, really hyper feminine presentation for a few years. And then I got into my career as a conservationist and an environmental educator, and went back to a mostly masc presentation. But then would have, like, whenever I would go away from work, or because I lived on site at these places, I would switch it up and almost be looked like a completely different person, and like the way that I dress in this ultra femme.

And so I had this like back and forth. But my gender expression always was about, like—I feel like it was a performance, you know. Like, when I was dressing very masc, I felt really cool, and, you know, I was like, I think I was playing out this thing in my head where I was like—I'm not whatever.

Fiolet: Yeah.

Parker: "I'm a stud, and I'm kissing these ladies. I'm not doing these things, but please forgive me. God," you know. And then when I started dressing really femme, I was like, "oh, like, I see the way that people reacted to that." And then, like, my fashion just got really over the top, especially when I stopped working in places where I had to have a certain uniform I was like, and I'm gonna do it however, like bright colors like this—

Fiolet: Yes!

Parker: And it wasn't just about showing whether I was like masc or femme, but it was about like, this expression of who I feel like I am is like, more than, bigger than some—in some ways over the top, which I've come to appreciate about myself, even though I felt bad about it in the past. And so, yeah, that's a little bit about gender expression. I don't know if I landed the plane.

[Cross talk and laughter.]

Parker: I don't think we're landing any planes here. Yeah. How do other people feel about their gender expression?

Fiolet: It's, it's interesting. I think what I want to say is somewhat different, like the thought coming to my mind right now is like, I feel like, I feel like I almost have like, two types of gender expression. There's like, there's clothing and dress and like jewelry and, and things like that, which I will circle back to in a second. And then there's like, there's like gender expression in the way of like taking off the masks of like mannerisms—like the amount of hours that I spent from the ages of 0-17 thinking about what my hands were doing, what my face was doing, what my feet were doing, what my [indecipherable] were doing, what my tongue was doing, what my fingers were doing, what I was looking at, who I was looking at, for how long, if they saw me? Like, that shit is crazy making!

Parker: Yeah!

Fiolet: When you start to like—and that's just like, thinking I'm a gay boy—and then like, you add in the layers of like, figuring out that, like, "I think I'm a girl, but also, like, not really, and also like, who do I talk to about this? Probably nobody but the devil." Sorry, God! I was an altar boy. I was an altar they.

And like, and that gender expression, I feel like it was somewhere along the last, I don't know, six years where like, I fully like, like, flung off the rest of those masks. It was even before I started embracing myself as like, saying that like, I identified as nonbinary, but like, had just like, let myself be and kind of like, unbutton the pants and let myself breathe fully. And like, and I get it like, it's not always gonna be pretty and it's not always gonna resonate with everybody, but it doesn't almost matter, because it's, it's a detoxification process that we're like, the flowers come out afterwards. And I feel like whole as opposed to like, like, I'm stifling something, but then like, making it look pretty, you know what I mean? Like, I feel pretty on the inside, and from what I wear day to day, can match that, depending on like, what I want to do. But then like—and I'll say my gender is also wrapped up in other identities that I have. Like, it's tied up in my neurodivergence. Like for me, my nonbinary-ness is like, so linked to my neurodivergence that like, I almost, like, can't talk about them separately.

Chris: Yeah.

Fiolet: Like, the way I think and the way my brain works is nonbinary, and it's, I don't know—like, my whole existence is nonbinary. I feel like, like realizing that almost, like, took my gender to, like, a whole new playing field.

Parker: That's really deep. That was—

Fiolet: Right?

Parker: — really powerful. Yeah.

Fiolet: It's—because it makes me—then it makes me feel like the cosmic being that I know I am.

Parker: You are!

Fiolet: I'm like, I don't have to just think about gender in these ways.

Parker: Yeah, I love that. I love that.

Chris: I resonate with that hard too. It's like being autistic. I feel like, when you do the Venn diagram of like, trans people and autism, it's like practically overlapping. It's a circle.

Fiolet: Yes

Chris: It's like, yeah, it is existing outside the binary. You're told, like, how you're supposed to behave on so many different levels. And like, when you're autistic, it doesn't work. When you aren't—

Parker: You just send Kennedy a note about like, about finally [laughter and cross talk]. We found the cause!

Fiolet: Found it!

Chris: I don't want him to know!

Parker: Spoiler alert! It's two communities that you—

[Cross talk and laughter]

Fiolet: I don't understand!

[Cross talk and laughter]

Chris: We ain't telling him shit!

[Laughter]

Yeah, so like and then like on top of that, the nonbinaryness of being mixed race too. It's like in my high school when I was growing up—this is in Green Bay, Wisconsin—it was very racially segregated, like you could pinpoint what group people belong to in the, in the cafeteria, by their race, and I got put into the freaks. The freaks were everyone who was mixed race or were goths.

Fiolet: Yes, yes!

Parker: The coolest part.

Chris: Who wouldn't want to be part of that? And then at my church, again, the Roman Catholic Church—the good white lady, church ladies would call my sister and myself “abominations” for being mixed race. And so it's just like there's binaries that people create everywhere.

Fiolet: Yes.

Parker: Yep.

Chris: And when you transcend one and realize “I'm never going to fit in there,” then it becomes easier to break down these other ones. And so it just became like—I think why the term nonbinary fit like immediately for me,

like clicked in my head, is because I've always been outside the binary in every aspect of my life, and so, like, it was like this—

[Cross talk]

It's almost just like, this is just one more place where I didn't fit in. Oh, and I should say, like, when I was a kid, I was convinced, because of all these identities that people around me didn't share, that an alien—

Fiolet: Yes.

Chris: —that got left behind somehow, and eventually my parents would come back and get me. I was, like, 100% convinced, and like, I even told my sister I'm like, “You're not my real sister. I'm an alien, and my parents are coming back to get me.” Like, we talked about that a little while ago and had a giggle about it, but like, it was, like, something that I really believed, like, wholeheartedly. I mean, there's no way I belong here, because, like everyone in my purview was either a boy or girl like and felt comfortable there.

Fiolet: Yes!

Chris: They were either like, white, Black, Asian—they were all one thing, and I was three things that people said weren't possible to be.

Fiolet: Yeah.

Chris: Right? And so it's just like—and then I didn't even know autism was a thing when I was growing up. I just knew that I could—I did not—like, I felt like there was a secret that everyone—

Fiolet: Yes!

Chris: —knew about how to like, communicate with each other that I wasn't privy to. And I'm like, “Why is nobody telling me how to do this?”

Fiolet: Oh my god! The way that that just, like, took me back.

Chris: Yeah! There's like, it feels like there's this socialization that just doesn't—like, even though I can mimic a lot of like, the way people behave around me, there's like, a part of socialization that just didn't compute.

Fiolet: The secret.

Chris: Yes! Like, you're just sitting there. Like, “How come everyone else is—

Fiolet: Yeah! How do they know?!

Chris: Yeah, everyone else has a script, and I didn't get it.

Fiolet: God, I don't want to interject myself. But, like, I remember telling my sister I think I'm an alien and I don't think I'm your real brother.

Chris: Oh my gosh!

Fiolet: And I believe that! I believed it. And I was like, I would pray. I was like, “I hope the spaceship comes tonight and just like, takes me back.

Chris: Yes.

Fiolet: And I thought that was why I didn't know the secret. Like, I thought there were secrets about communication, socialization, why I didn't have any friends. I was like, “oh, because I'm not from here.”

Chris: Yes! I felt the exact same!

Fiolet: But then when that got taken away, you know, I was like, “Well, shit. Then what is it? If I am from here, then, like, how does everyone just know these things and feel okay with it? Like, why am I just not?”

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: So like, yeah. So it feels like everyone else got a script at birth.

Fiolet: Yes.

Chris: That I just didn't get and I feel like that that is across most of my identities, like I'm on the outskirts from most of my identities, and like I'm never going to fit in, so I don't even try. I guess that's what it is. So that's what it feels like to me. That was not the question at all.

[Laughter]

1:05:07

Parker: That was so good. Okay, so let's go to like, a wrap up question. Because this has been such a great conversation, and so I want to wrap up our very first podcast. I'm so excited about this! I can't believe we're doing it; we're doing it so well! Up on the question of what helps us to survive and thrive as we are, in these multiple identities going through this, this world, right? Because, honestly, we're in, you know, I saw this thing like, “I'm tired of living in unprecedented times. I want to live in some preceded times.”

It's just been amazing me—not only like the change in our society, but also like we've gotten to this point where we are so polarized and I will never understand someone else's need to feel like they have to be in control of what another person is doing, how another person is living their lives. And we had this like brief moment, you know—not that like—the Biden administration came around, and I think a lot of folks within certain communities, liberal communities, were like, “Whew! It's all good,” right? Which was not true.

Chris: Don't even get me started.

Parker: It was not true! But, you know, I mean, better than now. But like, yeah, we are now in a thing where we are back to facing this, like openly hostile and more—like in ways that I haven't seen before, so open, like it's been there.

Chris and Fiolet: Yeah.

Parker: But now it's like so open in the—out. And people are feeling emboldened, and it is dangerous to be who we are. You know, like me and my partner came out, finally came out, in our last little bit of our identity that we're holding back as polyamorous, right? We had this kind of arch of like me coming out as queer first, and then I came out as nonbinary, and then he came out as bisexual, and then we had this, like little pocket, you know, and people would comment on it, like, I put it out on social media. I'm like, "I'm queer, and I'm finally coming out about it." People were like, "aren't you married to a man? Like, I don't know how that works." And I'm like, "I have a girlfriend, but I'm not gonna put that out here." And so we finally came out as poly. And so all of these like identities that are small segments of our population and that are people look at sideways, you know, we finally were like, "We're not hiding, we're coming out about this." And then we, like our country, openly, turned into like, like, "we hate all of that." And we could, like, you know, like—so I remember early on in this year, I was like, "Oh, hmm." I was like, "Well, you know, it's done now. It's done now. Like, and I'm not going back in the closet," you know. So it's been important to me to find ways to not only survive, but also to thrive. And I think for me, this community—

Oh, Chris went away. Well, it's okay, because Chris is in the very same room as we are, so we're gonna move this over, Chris, come over here.

Chris: Okay!

Parker: You know, so for me, the surviving and thriving has been about building community. It's been about making connections, like three of us.

Fiolet: Yes.

Parker: And being in spaces where I can be unapologetic and like trying to craft more and more time in those spaces so that I get fortified when I go out, out there, right? And that community has been really, really important to me. Now I'm on pass the mic to whoever wants it.

Fiolet: I can go. I mean, similarly with community, I mean without the two of you, first of all, like, I don't know, you need some badass besties, some nonbinary besties to just get through it. But like the friendships, the connection, like the layers of real talk that we can keep having, it's like, that's the biggest thing. And then it's like all the small things. It's, it's like knowing that if I leave the house, in my bag I've got the chapstick I'm gonna want. I've got snacks, I've got mints, I've got a getaway plan if I'm going somewhere that I feel sketched about. I mean, real talk, it's knowing I've got weed on me.

[Laughter]

So I can enjoy a lot of people.

Parker: If you gotta medicate a little.

Fiolet. You know? And it's just like, it's, having those things and I don't—and just—and like being happy with, like, the moment to momentness of life. Like, I think I spend a lot of time chasing like, well, once I get this I'll be happy, or once I meet that person, or once, I once this thing gets passed in law, or once that person dies...

Chris: What?!

Fiolet: Or, you know, whatever it is, once like this, this like event to happen... But like that never happens, because you're still, I'm still there with myself and the things I haven't worked on. But now that I've done that work, or I've done a lot of that work, I can be in almost any moment, and like, put myself into a place where I can be content, or I can take myself out of the emotion, or I can just physically take myself out of place. And that, I think, like having that autonomy and the community to reach out to is, is it.

Chris: Yeah, yeah. I think basically the same for me. You two are my pillars of support, like all the time, no matter what it's about, you know, and then doing the shadow work. For me, it was leaving spaces that, oh, your computer—

[Cross talk and laughter]

Parker: What!

Fiolet: We're dropping like flies! They're taking us down already!

[Laughter]

Chris: Yeah, my computer doesn't hold a charge anymore, but—if it is not like, continuously plugged in, but like, where was I going? Oh. [Laughter] I forgot where I was going.

Parker: It was a good place.

Chris: Oh, no!

Parker: Survival, thrival. Community?

Chris: Yeah, I said, community... Oh yeah, taking myself, like you said, out of spaces that aren't built for me or built, you know, to accommodate me, and that includes a marriage, that includes some jobs. I'll say that. You know, includes a lot of spaces where, like, I was never really affirmed. It was more like, "oh, yeah, okay, yeah, you're nonbinary, sure. I guess I'll use they, them, whatever." But it's like, no, I don't want that in my life anymore. At my big age, it's like, you're either in it with me or I don't need you.

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: And so that has been big. And I think the biggest thing I've done for healing and empowerment has been my educomics. Because while I can't make a difference in my own life, as far as like, how my family sees me or treats me, with the exception of—okay, I meant immediate family, my extended family is like—I am blessed with, like, my extended family on the family of color side. I am blessed like they came into my life late for other reasons that we don't need to get into in like this initial podcast, but now that they're in my life, they 100% affirm me, see me, like they do the work, they're fucking phenomenal. And now I have, like, a whole family support system that I never had before. But my immediate family—just my parents—my sister's great, too. I'm very bad at this.

Parker: You're doing great!

Chris: So my parents don't quite understand, do not 100% support me. And like, for a long time, I was trying to gather the crumbs that they would give me, and like, act like it was a feast, or be like, "Oh, I got a crumb. I got a crumb. More is coming. More is coming." And, like, just really try in those relationships, and then, like, not really get much back. So giving that up, like, giving up that, like, I'm not going to have that, you know, picture-perfect relationship with my parents has been huge, because now I don't need their approval.

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: And I can just be who I am and, like, find my chosen family and reconnect with my family of color that does support me. Even my grandpa, who doesn't understand the pronouns, thing is so on board in other ways—

Parker: Yeah.

Chris: That I don't even care, yeah, that he messes up the pronouns. Yeah. So.

Parker: I love that. And you got to go where you're being watered, like you gotta—like that's another part of surviving and thriving. Oh my goodness, this has been so great y'all, and I've just really enjoyed this time chatting with you all, and I hope that you all listening at home have also enjoyed this, because, you know, what is our tagline that... we've been trying to think of a tagline. I think it's this...

Chris: It's the second one.

Parker: Yes, too much for the binary, just right for the revolution. What what? Them's Wild. So you've been listening to Them's Wild. Stay loud, stay proud, stay wild, and we will see you next time. Make sure you follow us. Support us. Share this with someone who needs a little joy and a little justice today. All right. Thanks, everybody. Signing off.