

Ira ([00:00](#)):

Hey, it's Ira, the producer. I just wanted to pop in and say that as I was editing this episode, we actually got a voicemail from a listener called Annie who somehow predicted this week's and next week's episode topics.

Annie ([00:14](#)):

One of my favorite little bits of gender fuckery are folks who maybe still identify as a cis woman, but have a strong sense of masculinity. I personally am a butch lesbian who has had top surgery, and I still use she, her pronouns, and I identify as a woman and woman-y things still resonate with me, but I've had to do a lot of work personally to unlearn what a woman meant to other people and be more expansive in my understanding of womanhood and know that it can encompass masculinity. That gender expansiveness is just really cool and it's something I would love to hear discussed. Also fascinated by the idea of maybe folks who identify as male but have reclaimed that queer femininity. I just think it's like a cool, sweet spot and I'd love to hear y'all talk about it.

Ira ([01:05](#)):

Thanks so much for leaving us a message, Annie. Babette, Ally and I love hearing all of your thoughts and feedback about the show. So if you want to leave us a voicemail, you'll find a link on our site, which is genderspiralpod.com. Without further ado, enjoy the episode.

Speaker 3 ([01:23](#)):

Am I even queer?

([01:24](#)):

I think I want to take testosterone.

([01:26](#)):

I mean, I'm wearing men's underwear right now.

([01:27](#)):

Is that a boy, is that a girl?

([01:29](#)):

Man, woman, cisgender, transgender. We're born into language.

([01:33](#)):

Butch, femme, T girl.

([01:34](#)):

Decolonized.

([01:35](#)):

Queer, trans bipop.

([01:36](#)):

Neuro divergent.

([01:38](#)):

Cisgender, hetero, patriarchal capitalist girl boss.

[\(01:40\)](#):

Queer, femme, lipstick every day.

[\(01:42\)](#):

T for T, like Fag boy relationship.

[\(01:45\)](#):

Butch.

[\(01:45\)](#):

Boyish and spritely.

[\(01:47\)](#):

The Softer more fay.

[\(01:49\)](#):

Oh, but you're so feminine, you're so feminine.

[\(01:51\)](#):

Attraction to a hot T boy.

[\(01:53\)](#):

I used sexuality to try to understand my gender.

[\(01:56\)](#):

What does it look like for non-binary people to quote, unquote transition?

[\(02:01\)](#):

I was a boy, if I was looking down at the memory, I was a boy.

[\(02:03\)](#):

It's really difficult to look at gender identity head on.

[\(02:08\)](#):

Wait, I think I'm trans.

Babette [\(02:16\)](#):

I'm kind of right now going... I feel like every couple years I have a closet refresh and I feel like I'm at a weird age right now where it's like some of my clothes are still from college and that feels like a very different a Babette. You know what I mean? And so I'm going through my clothes and I was talking to my therapist about it. I was like, "I have to restart my entire wardrobe." And she was like, "Well, I don't know if that's true. Maybe you do, but let's interrogate that." So yesterday I tried on every single shirt I had, and if I couldn't style it in a way that felt good, I got rid of it.

Ally [\(02:49\)](#):

I bet.

Babette [\(02:51\)](#):

I just realized a lot of it is like I have to layer, I have to layer a lot.

Ally ([02:54](#)):

Ooh.

Babette ([02:55](#)):

I think layering is a gay thing a little bit.

Ally ([02:59](#)):

Absolutely. Also, I will say we have the same brain to go through everything and try it on. I made a color coded Excel spreadsheet for all of my clothes. I got addicted to eBay over the pandemic.

Babette ([03:16](#)):

Yep.

Ally ([03:18](#)):

I have way too much shit, and I was just like, okay, I really have to get rid of stuff, but I need to be able to track it. Just hyper-focused engaged was just like, I'm trying on all my clothes to music now.

Babette ([03:29](#)):

Exactly. Wait, that's so funny. We just had an extra room in our house and so I have a really insane closet. It's pretty fucked up.

Ally ([03:37](#)):

Oh my god.

Babette ([03:38](#)):

It's like a whole room. That's just my fucking closet basically.

Ally ([03:41](#)):

Okay.

Babette ([03:42](#)):

And so I need a system, so I literally have that system where I also am addicted to eBay and so I'm just like, yeah, that kind of systematic system where I'm like, no, but I need to figure out. Whereas I feel like people with normal brains are just like, oh yeah, I like this shirt. I feel like my best friends are just like, "Oh yeah, this shirt's great." And I'm like, "But is it conveying myself in the way that I want to be conveyed? Do they know that I'm wearing this in a Y2K, girly pop light, whatever way?" And my therapist is like, "It seems like a lot of your interest in clothing is personal and stylistic, but also about how you're read." And I was like, "It's really true."

Ally ([04:19](#)):

Yes.

Babette ([04:20](#)):

I just feel like my cis friends just buy a linen shirt and they're like, "This is really great."

Ally ([04:25](#)):

The thing is,, I'm being so over the top, but then the second I go to the mall and try something on, I swear to god it was made as a joke, as a practical joke on me. I'm like, this is hugging my hips tighter than a lover, and then it's baggy around the collarbone. I'm like, is this a joke? I have to go on eBay and get the craziest because I know it will fit me because modern cuts, I felt this way all through high school where I would put on clothes and be like, you're telling me this fits right? I felt like I was being gaslit by limited to and packed sun.

Babette ([05:07](#)):

No, exactly. When I was in high school, I was an athlete, so I was pretty skinny, but I've always been really tall is more my thing, and so just the proportions of things not fitting and now I don't fit in most normal clothes brands or whatever, but I am in that in between place where I'm not necessarily going to identify as plus size. I'm a size 18 and some up fucked up brands just don't carry a size 18.

Ally ([05:31](#)):

Totally.

Babette ([05:32](#)):

And so now I'm like, yeah, similarly just always scrounging on eBay. Because the vintage stuff fits me fine. Some of those nicer made vintage pieces fit me pretty well, but no, it's such a scrounging effort and I was just talking to my therapist about how that's maybe because I've always just tried to assemble this thing that feels good for me. I feel like I have a little bit of a scavenger mentality when it comes to clothes and I'm just, I am like, no, I got to get this because who knows when the next thing will fit me. And I feel like now I'm trying to undo that of, okay, maybe I can actually spend a hundred bucks on something I really love, love and I'm going to wear it for a long time instead of just scavenging on eBay. I don't know.

Ally ([06:16](#)):

Yes, having 50 \$5 items, it's like, okay.

Babette ([06:20](#)):

No, exactly. I have 80 shirts that I'm fine with and right now I'm trying to get to a place where I'm like, oh, it'd be sick to have just a few things that I actually really, really love. But that feels like so much pressure because I also have 20 different personalities, so I don't know.

Ally ([06:38](#)):

That's like queerness meets neuro divergence for me. Because I'm just like-

Babette ([06:42](#)):

No. Exactly.

Ally ([06:43](#)):

... Either wear the same outfit three days in a row. Pretty much if you see me at night and then you see me the next morning, it will be the exact same outfit. I don't wake up in the morning and change outfits. The change for me comes mid-afternoon where I just go, well, this smells bad. Time to change.

Babette ([07:03](#)):

You're like, this is necessity.

Ally ([07:04](#)):

Yeah, I'm like, this felt great to wear last night. Let's do that again. Put it on in the morning all wrinkled. I spoke to a friend of mine, Roberta Colindrez, who you may know as the butch heart throb in literally everything, including the original role of Joan in Fun Home on Broadway. She's in shows like Vida and a League of Their Own, and I was really curious about Roberta's unique perspective on female masculinity.

Roberta ([07:38](#)):

What's up, hottie?

Ally ([07:39](#)):

What's up baby? You are a she, her, the ask of center individual.

Roberta ([07:46](#)):

Yeah.

Ally ([07:48](#)):

I'm interested in that. What does masculinity look like on you particularly?

Roberta ([07:56](#)):

I mean, I guess you tell me, because I don't know. Masculinity, I mean, I'm wearing men's underwear right now and I like things that are generally attributed to the likes of men, the likings, I mean, of men like cars and I mean that's a good question. I'm truly, because that's the discussion I guess we're having is what is masculine and why do I feel as though I'm masculine of center and yet female? Right.

Ally ([08:27](#)):

Yeah, definitely. Yeah, a great place as your friend to start from is I think your style. Your clothes, your hair, how you look, and I feel like you were famously in a survey group photo of every hot butch person in existence for the New York Times.

Roberta ([08:52](#)):

That was cool, man, because the article itself was... So many articles nowadays are fresh faces of whatever, and it was actually, let's look at this generational spectrum of butches and dykes. It was cool. It was really, they even went more specific with it and we're like, "What is a butch?"

Ally ([09:14](#)):

Yeah, that's very interesting. I think the part of this that you're talking about where it was not 16 year olds, Brooklyn 16 year olds being photographed for being queer, that part is very cool. It really felt a historical capsule to look at, and it was just very cool to see you in that.

Roberta ([09:36](#)):

I mean, yeah, I'm sitting next to Eileen Miles and shit I'm like, Roxanne Gay.

Ally ([09:46](#)):

When it comes to your style or whatever, I just feel like you have a flare to what you do. It is masculine, but there's just so much to you, to me, from the outside that it's just a very cool balancing act. And does it feel like that on your end? Is it intentional?

Roberta ([10:05](#)):

I mean, it's intentional and natural I suppose. I was a very, very gay kid. Super. There's tomboy and then there's like that is a future lesbian, and that was me. I think people learned the term gay from looking at me. People were like, that girl is, there's a term for this. I was gay. My mom would have to coerce me into wearing... We would do full deals. My mom would be like, "Listen bitch, if you wear a dress to your school photo today, you can spend the night at your friend's house." It was like that kind of hard deals.

Ally ([10:49](#)):

Full brokering.

Brontez Purnell ([10:50](#)):

But yeah, I just felt, obviously the clothes is just more comfortable. If I'm wearing a polo shirt that's two sizes too big and jeans that are too big and basketball shoes, I'm going to feel much more comfortable than in anything else. But there was a weird jealousy or a jealousy and maybe a shame that I wasn't, or I just felt so different because I would see all the girls my age, of course, and all my friends were hot fem chicks, and I just thought it was so cool to be femme. I just idolized it so much. It was just like, wow. There's so much confidence that goes with it. That's different than, of course, wearing a really sleek jacket. Dressing femme is just so cool and it's such an art. It lives in this super performative space, it's so cool. And I couldn't do that.

Ally ([11:41](#)):

Yes, I feel the same. Yeah.

Roberta ([11:43](#)):

It was weird because when I did wear dresses, people were like, "Wow." And even actually last summer I was doing a movie and my co-star who I had been working with for literally a month and a half at this

point, he's like, I had extra makeup on that day, my character obviously, and he looks at me and goes, "You're really pretty." And I was just like, "What?"

Ally ([12:12](#)):

I'm confused though. In what way? Was it, you're actually really pretty, or was it like, whoa, dude, you're beautiful.

Roberta ([12:20](#)):

I think it was a little bit of both. His whole fucking head tilted and was like, we've been doing two people scenes for the last month and a half. You've only seen me for the last month and a half. But it does feel weird. I don't know. It's a very tricky, if someone tells me, oh, you're pretty, that makes me feel really good, but it also makes me feel really silly.

Ally ([12:48](#)):

Whoa. Yeah.

Roberta ([12:50](#)):

I don't know. Did you ever wear dresses or anything? I mean, do you remember what it's like wearing it? It was just the feeling of, I look like I am out of place here.

Ally ([13:02](#)):

Yes. I think for me, I completely identify with you when you were like, some people were really excelling at femininity and I was fucking floundering. And it just really feels really elusive to me. I can look at dresses and accessories and I mean, there are just outfits that are so beautiful and I never would've gotten there in a million years with a million dollars, but I can do fancy man really well, like a dapper man. I'm obsessed with that. And that's just for me, that's like the sweet spot that I could be good at.

Roberta ([13:44](#)):

Dude, there is a couple of music videos that fucked me. I think we grew up during music videos, but there were two exact music videos, three, that fucked me up. And one of them, I think I knew I was gay and didn't know what it meant, when George Michael's freedom happened.

Ally ([14:03](#)):

Yes.

Roberta ([14:05](#)):

Like Christie Turlington busting through those doors in the sheet. And then there was Vogue. Vogue where Madonna's like, of course I'm looking at Madonna, and she's so beautiful and perfect and feminine and striking all these beautiful poses. And then there's the guy with his hair meticulously combed back and the suit and the scarf leaning on a podium. And I was like, that's me. And then there was like, well, this is unrelated, but Tony Braxton, you're making me high. That's just, she's hot.

Ally ([14:40](#)):

Yeah.

Roberta ([14:40](#)):

Tony Braxton. Damn. I wonder what she's up to? Still, my sister and I are both isolating in our childhood home right now. So she was, I guess cleaning out her closet and she's washing all this stuff and there was this cute skirt, air drying, and she's like, "I think I'm going to go donate this stuff." And I'm like, ugh. What I would give to be like, "Wait, can I just have that skirt?" And then actually wear it. I wish, it's so cute. It's like a Romeo and Michelle skirt and I'm just good. But the shoes, what shoes would I wear it with?

Ally ([15:15](#)):

Yes. Wait, you should.

Roberta ([15:17](#)):

I don't know dude. It feels good to wear that stuff, but it also just... Here's the thing about being masculine or masculine presenting or dressing a certain way is that I would feel comfortable if I wore a dress in some fun pumps or something, but I don't feel that other people would be comfortable looking at me in that stuff.

Ally ([15:40](#)):

Wow.

Roberta ([15:41](#)):

And I would just feel that just because, and I gather that from just this history, just actually wearing a dress to someone's wedding and then being like, dude, yes, you look gorgeous. And it was just like the tone is they feel sorry that I usually dress like such shit or something.

Ally ([15:59](#)):

Whoa, wait. Yes. That is so interesting because it's, there's still a power, there's something going on where it's like, oh, you're finally doing it right, or we can see that.

Roberta ([16:12](#)):

Yeah, see this whole time I knew it was there. What did you know it was there?

Ally ([16:17](#)):

Wow. Wait, that's really interesting. I was listening to the other podcast that we did a long time ago.

Roberta ([16:26](#)):

Yeah, dude, I was just thinking about that.

Ally ([16:29](#)):

We were talking about worrying that women would think that we're being predatory, so we get extra, extra friendly, extra friends zoned. So I'm really interested in you as someone who, you use she, her,

you're a woman, you're involved in womanhood, but interacting with other women is fraught at times. How do you navigate, not that there's just a binary, but feeling masculine around women feeling kind of feminine around women. Which one feels more comfortable?

Roberta ([17:02](#)):

I think that's the thing that for me is most historically tied to gender or the idea of gender is just feeling very different than other girls my whole life. Because I was such a beyond tomboy, because I was so obviously gay as a kid, I just felt so different. Of course, I was dressing a certain way and all the girls were doing... I wasn't shaving my legs when all the other girls were, and I just felt so weird already that I didn't try to fix it in any way that would make me fit in because I didn't want to draw attention to the fact that I needed to fix anything. Just being always so aware that I was so different than other girls. And then of course when I slept with a girl for the first time, I was like 21 years old and I-

Ally ([17:48](#)):

Same. No, I'm just like, Oh man, brother.

Roberta ([17:49](#)):

I was literally the week before I turned 22, so late in the game. I woke up in the morning and I looked at myself in the mirror and I was like, yeah bitch. But I was the first time that I looked in the mirror and was saw myself as a woman or even saw myself as a person. When I was looking in the mirror, I would just concentrate on one certain part of my face so that I didn't have to look at the whole thing.

Ally ([18:20](#)):

Whoa.

Roberta ([18:22](#)):

Which is all of this was, I was realizing all of this in the same moment, like wow, I've never actually looked at what I look like entirely. Oh, I'm a woman. And then of course over the next several years I was just like, oh, right. My whole life, every time that I had a memory of when I was a kid or when I was a teenager or pre-teen or whatever the fuck, it was always the exact situation except I was a boy. If I was looking down at the memory, I was a boy. It was me wearing all this stuff and talking and having the exact same event. It was just a boy there. And then I was like, oh, I don't see myself that way anymore. And it was ever since sleeping with a woman, and I think it was because I was like, oh shit, I'm just a woman who likes women, but I felt like the only way that I could possibly feel different than other girls is if I wasn't a girl or something.

Ally ([19:16](#)):

Yes. Totally. I mean, because women who love women is an impossible category for how we grew up with our parents. It was like that's not an option. And the only options are women who love men and men who love women. So if I love women, I must be a man. It's very backwards math.

Roberta ([19:35](#)):

So yeah, it was just a really confusing, and it's always been confusing. I mean now still it's confusing because now I get they them multiple times a day, all the time. I got, they theme in a Target in North

Austin the other day and I was like, the first person that they them me was a queer. And then there were three when I would assume are very straight, normal fucking Karen ass women, but I went to return a hat or some and they're like, the first person's like, "Oh, they were just looking for the hats and then the other..." I don't know how... Also, the amount of employees helping me just return a hat. It was actually kind of cool, but it was just a ton of people being they, and I was just like, this is obviously progressive and I'm proud of all of you, but I didn't say any of this, but I'm playing it in my head. I'm like, I'm just a woman man. I'm just a chick.

Ally ([20:30](#)):

Yes. That right there, just a woman. It's so interesting to me because I have a lot of friends who are she, her, masc. I'm really interested in the feeling that it feels, not as radical or you're just like, how this literal middle-aged straight woman being quote, unquote more radical than me by using they, them? I just think that that's so interesting.

Roberta ([21:00](#)):

There's some of course part of me that feels really protective of being a woman or just a woman or whatever the fuck, because I'm just like, I just somehow believe that I wasn't a woman for so long that now I'm like, let me just have the thing that I didn't know that I was before it was prescribed to me.

Ally ([21:22](#)):

Definitely. I've been to a couple stores recently where clearly the people working there have been trained to use gender inclusive. It's a very y'all.

Roberta ([21:35](#)):

Y'all on purpose.

Ally ([21:37](#)):

And someone came up to me... Yeah, y'all on purpose. My girlfriend and I were shopping and someone came up and went, "Hey, sweet people." Is how they greeted us and we were like, oh wow, that is even more, but-

Roberta ([21:51](#)):

That's actually distractingly stupid. I'm offended now. Just go ahead and ask me my gender at that point. Don't call me mean.

Ally ([22:07](#)):

My thing right now is very-

Roberta ([22:07](#)):

Just ask them.

Ally ([22:10](#)):

They, them as default is maybe interesting, but I think ultimately still missing the point. They're still an assumption there.

Roberta ([22:21](#)):

You're right, it feels like it's going in the right direction, but somehow it's in a funny place currently where, I don't know, sometimes to me they, them stuff, depending on who it comes from or how it's used or the intentionality behind it just works in this way that's in a more insidious way of just reaffirming gender stereotypes, and I think that's why I got defensive of I'm just a woman. It's like if someone assumes that I'm they, them because I don't wax my mustache and I have short hair and armpit hair and leg hair and wearing oversized basketball shorts, but I can still be a woman and be those things. I am a woman and I'm those things and wear those things and look this way and don't shave this, and so some of it just makes me feel the same kind of, there's something that's unclear about you that I felt as a kid or a young person that was super out of consciousness just away from my body.

Ally ([23:29](#)):

I feel like we're close to figuring out what those interactions could look like. We're not quite there. It's all over the spectrum. Because I'm sure even for me going to a restaurant and everyone's like, ladies.

Roberta ([23:43](#)):

Yeah. Hi ladies.

Ally ([23:45](#)):

I bet that's crazy for you also. I mean, you're a woman, but are you a lady? My working theory is that no one is the ladies that they're talking to.

Roberta ([23:56](#)):

Yeah. Who actually, where are the ladies at? Straight up. Who are the ladies?

Ally ([24:04](#)):

Where are the ladies? Ladies Night is empty.

Roberta ([24:06](#)):

I haven't met a lady since 1998.

Ally ([24:12](#)):

Okay. I want to talk to you about acting. Okay, so you're that masc girl hottie in absolutely everything you've ever been in. You're famously everyone's gay awakening. Have you-

Roberta ([24:30](#)):

Wait, just out of curiosity, who's everyone?

Ally ([24:34](#)):

People, I would imagine on the internet, people who make videos of just photos of you that go to a song on TikTok.

Roberta ([24:42](#)):

Oh, yeah. The ones that spin? The little photos that spin?

Ally ([24:46](#)):

Yeah, exactly. Have you picked these roles on purpose or do you feel like they've found you and do you playing these characters?

Roberta ([24:57](#)):

Okay, so here's the thing about acting or casting. If you're casting something and you're seeing a room full of people, every day, 45 people have come in said the same fucking lines and try to capture the same character or whatever. At some point someone walked into the room and that was already the character. So I mean, it's flattering to me to be considered for the hot new bartender or something. Obviously there's some sort of dysphoria that is like, you want me to play a hot girl? Okay. But it feels really good and so whatever. Then I always end up getting cast opposite, gorgeous, fucking talented, really charming women, so what am I going to do? Of course I can act attracted to them.

Ally ([25:52](#)):

Yeah.

Roberta ([25:54](#)):

Please.

Ally ([25:56](#)):

Has there ever been a role or maybe even more early on in your career where they tried to over feminize you or have you ever felt pushed in either direction?

Roberta ([26:09](#)):

Yeah. I just think that the entertainment industry is maybe the funniest industry to be gay in because it's like the concept of your faggotry is constantly presented to you from someone else's point of view. When you get a breakdown for a character, it's like the first word as a descriptor is gay or straight up lesbian, queer or butch.

([26:38](#)):

And it's funny because the butch they use is a one word that is going to capture your hairstyle, your mannerisms, the way you talk, what bars you hang out at. All that. I remember I did this show, this pilot, thank god it didn't get picked up. I played a butch interior designer with of course an asymmetrical haircut, and this is La Butch, so it's actually true for la, but not at all for New York. Lesbians Butch, and she was in Ave straight up spaghetti strap, tank top, asymmetrical haircut, spaghetti strap, tank top, this green moto jacket with studs on the lapel and then just the skinniest fucking jeans you've ever seen and booties with a heel.

Ally ([27:28](#)):

What?

Roberta ([27:29](#)):

Yeah, full Louis the IV little booties.

Ally ([27:33](#)):

She sounds like an ally. She sounds like a straight ally.

Roberta ([27:39](#)):

Yes. She sounds like what a really, really, really straight girl from Ohio wears to an audition the first week that she's in New York to audition for butch.

Ally ([27:51](#)):

Oh my god. If that happened to you today, would you be like, I'll roll with it, or would you be like, maybe I can talk to wardrobe?

Roberta ([27:59](#)):

No, I would probably actually talk to the director and be like, "Wen you said butch, what did you...?" It's always good to question first and then be like, that's great, so no, this is wrong.

Ally ([28:15](#)):

Are you at a point where you can just be like, I don't want to wear lipstick, or I don't know. Do people still try to feminize you or do you feel like you found your groove and people are like, yeah, we hired you because we know what you look like and we know what we want to do with your character this way?

Roberta ([28:30](#)):

It depends on the job too, because the league of their own, which is obviously in the forties, and women just wore makeup a ton back then. So the way that they wanted to make me up was more than I'm used to for sure, and I had to just be like, I absolutely hate the feeling of makeup. It's also going to be 97 degrees some of these days and so humid it's going to slide off my face. I try not to wear makeup if I can just because it depends on the characters, but of course there are characters that do wear makeup and because of the time I don't feel like I have much of a choice. And I'm not the character.

Ally ([29:09](#)):

Totally.

Roberta ([29:10](#)):

So it doesn't always, of course, it's not always based on my comfort or discomfort. It's just like, yeah, this butch in the seventies probably did still wear makeup because she didn't want to get her kicked on her way home from school.

Ally ([29:22](#)):

Totally. Yeah. This was another part in Tales from the Closet. Shout out. Where you were like, I'm actually so ready to get a script where the first two descriptors for me aren't Latin butch.

Roberta ([29:37](#)):

Yeah.

Ally ([29:37](#)):

So how do you feel with that now? Do you feel like you would play since it's not you, it's the character, would you play someone totally different? Are you looking to play a straight mother of two with a loving husband?

Roberta ([29:56](#)):

I mean, I would. See, I have to be as progressive as I want to be about myself or whatever about my politics or the world around me. I still have to be very cognizant of I'm not the only person looking at me. If I'm doing a project, if I'm acting, other people are going to be looking at me, and audiences are so, people are so... That's why it's hard for actors to come out. I have no choice because I look fucking gay, but actors that... Don't laugh so hard.

Ally ([30:23](#)):

I think that it's underselling yourself because there's a lot of people who look really gay who are not out.

Roberta ([30:29](#)):

Yeah, but... Right, that's true. That's true.

Ally ([30:33](#)):

But that's interesting. Do you feel like you had to come out, or do you think you started out?

Roberta ([30:39](#)):

I think that it was not really a choice because I was already playing gay before I was out in my personal life. Everybody that knew me knew I was gay, but I wasn't trying to do gay roles on purpose. I kept getting cast as gay. And also I started building a career as it was more expected of people, artists to make a political statement all the time and be super front facing with their politics and shit, so I didn't really have a choice. If I did have a choice, would I be out? Probably, yeah.

([31:14](#)):

If only because when I was growing up, there was this mariachi singer who everyone was... My parents would suggest, they'd be like, "Aw, she's a dyke." But she wasn't out.

Ally ([31:26](#)):

Whoa.

Roberta ([31:27](#)):

I was just like, there's a rumor that someone's gay. Whoa. And then was Ricky Martin. I remember I found a piece of paper, actually, my mom and I were in Argentina one time and I was like, "Mom, Ricky Martin's gay." And she was like, "How fucking dare you?" She was genuinely so off at me, and she's like, "Why? Because he dresses well, because he is not out clearly fucking women and paparazzi are getting him being a fucking womanizer." And I was like, "Yeah, but he's gay."

Ally ([32:05](#)):

And I bet you got under her skin.

Roberta ([32:07](#)):

Oh my god. Every Latin woman, woman. You couldn't be like, Ricky Martin is gay. I wrote on a piece of paper, I found it not recently, a couple of years ago I found it that says, "Ricky Martin is gay." Awesome. And it's because I was like, I'm going to write this fucking down mom, watch. I'm going to write this down, that's he's gay. and then one day going to... And then boom, he came out and I found that piece of paper and I was just like-

Ally ([32:34](#)):

Read it and weep.

Roberta ([32:35](#)):

Yeah. I knew.

Ally ([32:37](#)):

Oh, my god.

Roberta ([32:38](#)):

Anyway, yeah, it's not really a choice for people anymore. I think everybody... Somebody was clearly, if Elliot Page wasn't out or something, people would expect Elliot Page to be out.

Ally ([32:53](#)):

Or Elliot started right now, he would just start as a very openly trans dude. It would just be like, great, that's that actor.

Roberta ([33:04](#)):

Yeah. Which of course is in some ways troubling to me just thinking like, wow, people really got to announce their shit nowadays, which some way too cuts out any possibility of creativity, of just being able to see people differently. I wish that we could just accept actors or playing characters so that yeah, we could be in this place. Right now, we're in this place too, where people get mad when straight actors play gay people and it's like, well then sure, but also then are you going to get mad when a gay person plays a straight person or are they just only going to have to live within this gay structure that's built around them?

Ally ([33:45](#)):

Totally. That's really limiting.

Babette ([33:52](#)):

Wow. Roberta's mad funny. I'm really fascinated by this idea of failing femininity as a kid. I feel like it's something that so many queer and trans people experience. And then being able to come back and reclaim womanhood as an adult, which doesn't necessarily mean presenting feminine the way that you were supposed to as a kid.

Ally ([34:17](#)):

Oh my God. Totally. Yeah, I can really relate to failing at femininity. I like-

Babette ([34:22](#)):

Oh, I could definitely tell you failed at femininity Ally.

Ally ([34:27](#)):

What about me tells you that?

Babette ([34:28](#)):

Right? Exactly. Yeah.

Ally ([34:33](#)):

Okay. But side note, I feel like there are so many passing ass trans men who were like, I was prom queen. Some people out here just nailed femininity, and then they dropped the mic and they fully transitioned, and then now they're excelling at masculinity.

Babette ([34:53](#)):

No, they're just god's favorite.

Ally ([34:56](#)):

Yeah, they're just god's favorite. They're just hot. That's the answer to that. No, but I have, okay, I was talking to my brother about this and we were screaming because I used to just not brush my hair, and I do feel like this is a little moment where my mom was an ally because she was like, that's okay. And I was really testing the waters. A tangle, grew to essentially a bird's nest sticking out from the back of my head and it just stayed there. We're talking months. And then I went to visit my grandma and she sat me down and I had me watch SpongeBob while she detangled the rat's nest tangle in the back of my head. I just was like, I don't want this hair. You won't let me cut it off. I'm not here to maintain it, but I do think that must've looked so crazy.

Babette ([35:49](#)):

Right, okay. Not to keep dragging you, but that is also the most white person's story I've ever heard because my hair was washed, braided, and detangled every Sunday without fail. That was a non option, so I'm like, oh, it's so sweet.

Ally ([36:10](#)):

No, for real. This is the Twitter thread that was like, why people don't wash their legs, and I was just kind of like, wow. Yeah. Oh my god. Interesting.

Babette ([36:24](#)):

That's so funny.

Ally ([36:25](#)):

I know what that says, and I do agree with it, and that's fucked up.

Babette ([36:30](#)):

Yeah, my hair was really always done and I feel like maybe for me, the black girl version of failing femininity, there's just such an obsession with length and your hair being long enough and growing and the people who have longer hair considered more feminine, and I always did sports, so my hair was always braided in cornrows and I definitely just looked like a little boy sometimes, or I don't know. There was just so many different phases.

([36:59](#)):

I wore barrettes kindergarten through third grade or something. It felt like just because black hair takes a little more effort, I love it, but I feel like it's not really for black girls, it's not really up to them from ages zero to 10, do you know what I mean? And then middle school is where you ruin your hair with a straightener. But all of it felt wrong if I'm being honest. But I don't know. I feel like now I'm absolutely reaping the joy of my hair and dying it how I want and doing things how I want, but as a kid, just so much shit isn't up to you, and I feel like all of it just feels like gender failure a little bit. I don't don't know.

Ally ([37:49](#)):

Totally.

Babette ([37:50](#)):

Unless you have really... Whatever. People who have really great forward-thinking parents like fuck you. I don't know. But I don't think any kids are getting mullets of their own volition. I mean-

Ally ([38:01](#)):

Oh my god. Well, yeah, talk about the parents. It's like when you see a child who literally has three strands of hair and there's a barrette hook to it, and you're like, your parents needed everyone to know you were a girl so much that they've done this to you.

Babette ([38:20](#)):

So fucking funny.

Ally ([38:21](#)):

I do agree though. I do feel like I've found my equilibrium now and honestly, the more masculine I'm able to present the way that I want to, then the more feminine I do feel.

Babette ([38:33](#)):

I love that. So this week we spoke on how it feels to quote, unquote, fail at femininity, which feels so deeply relatable on many levels. Next week we're continuing this thread by sporting what it's like to fail at capital M, Masculinity with artists and Oakland punk icon Brontez Purnell.

Brontez Purnell ([38:56](#)):

This is what the problem I have with my own masculinity, my own identification. Public image really is what other people think of you, and we do play that game with society all the time. I can self-identify till the Gods come home. It's like when I'm getting followed down the street, I have a fat ass and a high voice, and they're like, "Hey, sister, where you get all the muscles?" Yo, to that, I am a woman.

Ally ([39:28](#)):

Gender Spiral is an original podcast from Audiation. This episode was mixed by Matt Noble. Music is composed by Chanel Critchlow. Art is by Joey Hahn with Graphics by Honey Hodges. The executive producers are Ireland Meacham. Myself, Ally Beardsley, my co-host, Babette Thomas, who's also our story editor, and Sandy Smolins.

Babette ([39:48](#)):

Thank you to our guest, Roberta Colindrez. You can catch her as Lupe and a A League of their Own on Prime and in a million other projects. You know what? You should just Google her. If you like the show, please head over to patreon.com/genderspiralpodcast to support us and get access to fun stuff like our Discord server, bonus content, and complimentary merch. You might even find Ally's, personal only fans.

Ally ([40:14](#)):

It's just pictures of my dog's paws. Everybody calm down. You can also check us out@genderspiralpaw.com where you'll find a link to leave us a voicemail and ask us questions. Please tell us who you want to hear from, what you want to hear about. Tell us stuff about your life. We might even use it on the show. And follow us at @genderspiral. Subscribe wherever you get your podcast and stay tuned. We're releasing a brand new episode every single week this summer.