

Alice: Hello and welcome to Queer as Fact, the podcast bringing you queer history from around the world and throughout time. I'm Alice.

Irene: I'm Irene.

Eli: I'm Eli.

A: And today we're going to be talking about the Crow warrior, craftsperson and *batée* Osh-Tisch.

[intro music plays]

A: We have a few content warnings before we start this episode. I'm going to use some outdated language for Indigenous people and genders in quotes; ah... there'll be discussions of war, including injuries and death in war; and also discussions of the US mistreatment of Indigenous peoples in the 19th and 20th centuries; as well as a couple of mentions of domestic abuse. So if that's anything that you don't want to hear, feel free to skip this episode and check out any of our other content.

I'd just like to start with a disclaimer that I am not Crow, I am not Indigenous, and I'm not two-spirit, so I've done my best talking about this culture and this gender, but I've been researching this for a few weeks and obviously there's a lot that I won't know. So wherever possible I've tried to rely on sources from Crow people, or failing that sources written by Indigenous Americans more broadly, or by scholars whose work is actively endorsed by those communities. But if you are Crow or Indigenous or two-spirit and I've messed something up, please get in touch and let me know and I'll post a correction.

I also wanted to say before I start that I read a lot of Indigenous American people's thoughts on what terminology they prefer – with regard to 'American Indian' or 'Native American' or 'Indigenous' or anything like that – and there's no consensus on what terms we should use. Different people like and dislike different terms and I couldn't find anything that everyone agreed was okay. So when I'm talking about all the peoples who lived in North American before European settlement, I've chosen to use the term 'Indigenous Americans'. While it's not the most common term, it was the least contentious one I could find. But wherever possible I'll use the name of specific nation that I'm talking about.

The last thing I want to say before we get into the episode proper is that there have never been consistent pronouns used in English for Osh-Tisch. Crow people who knew Osh-Tisch during their life will generally use she/her or alternate between she/her and he/him. It's worth noting that some Crow people who have learnt English as a second language will use inconsistent pronouns – so alternating between she/her and he/him – for cis people as well, reflecting the fact that Crow doesn't have gendered pronouns.

E: Oh, cool.

A: Yeah.

I: I understand now why the pronouns were so complicated for you.

A: During writing this script I went back and forth, like, four times of like, going and changing every pronoun, and then being like “[inhales] No, I might go and change those again.” [laughs]

E: [laughs]

A: It was terrible. [laughs] It was a bad time.

I: [laughs]

A: So Crow woman Lillian Bullshows, who knew Osh-Tisch during her childhood, uses both he/him and she/her and when she's explaining how Crow people talk about Osh-Tisch she says, quote "They don't call him 'him' or 'her', they just say 'a person'." So in talking about Osh-Tisch I've chosen to use they/them pronouns to reflect this use of non-gendered pronouns which Osh-Tisch would have used and heard in most of their day-to-day life among the Crow people, as well as to reflect the nature of their *batée* gender as being outside the male/female binary. Within quotes I've retained the pronouns that the speaker used at the time. I'm sorry if that's a little bit confusing sometimes, but that's what I've done.

E: We'll manage.

I: I think we can handle that.

E: I think people in general need to get more used to that kind of thing.

I: Mm.

A: Yeah.

E: Regarding historical trans people.

I: Inconsistent pronouns are not as confusing as people insist on making them out be.

E: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

I: Basically.

I: I mainly meant just genuinely syntactically confusing within a sentence...

E: Oh, okay.

A: ...if I've put a quote within a sentence, but I think we'll handle it. But yeah, I did change my notes from they/them to she/her to they/them to she/her several times, so I'll be interested to hear your thoughts at the end of this on the decision I've made.

E: Okay.

I: But never 'him'?

A: I never used he/him, but I did read scholars who did use he/him.

I: Okay.

A: So at the very start, yeah, I had some notes using he/him, 'cos I knew nothing and I was just writing down what the scholar said.

I: Alright.

E: I do remember when the last time we talked about this, about how it was going, I was like "Just use 'they'!" and you were like, "No. 'She'."

A: [laughs]

E: And I was like "Okay," and now we're here.

A and I: [laugh]

E: So I'm very curious.

A: Yeah, so when I said that I hadn't come across Lillian Bullshows yet, who is a Crow person who actively said "we didn't use 'him' or 'her'".

E: Okay.

A: So, yeah. That was what changed my mind. But when Crow people do fall down on one side or the other...

E: Uh-huh.

A: ...they will fall down on 'she' rather than 'he'.

E: Okay.

A: Which is why I was using 'she'. Osh-Tisch was born in 1854, and they assigned male at birth. They are a part of the Crow or Apsáalooke nation. I'm going to use the word 'Crow', mostly because I'm not sure I'm saying their native name right and I don't want to mess it up fifty times.

I: Yeah that's fair.

E: Fair enough.

A: Among the nations around the Crow, those people refer to Crow as 'crow', literally the bird, in their own languages.

E: Mhm.

A: So I think it's a pretty acceptable choice. The Crow are an Indigenous nation in the area around Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota, so the inland north-west of the USA.

E: Thank you.

[laughter]

E: I was like "Ah yes... Wyoming...."

[laughter]

A: At the time that Osh-Tisch was born, they were living a semi-nomadic lifestyle on the Great Plains, supporting themselves largely through hunting buffalo.

I: Is that different to what they were doing before that? Or is that just different to what they've been doing since then?

A: Uh... both.

I: Okay.

A: So their lifestyle was pretty largely affected by the introduction of horses, in...

I: Ah, okay.

A: ...the 1700s and that made it a lot easier to hunt buffalo.

I: So they did more buffalo-hunting after that?

A: So that's a factor. I'm not sure about the details of Crow history, but yeah, like, their lifestyle had changed over the past few hundred years.

I: Okay, cool.

A: Osh-Tisch wasn't named Osh-Tisch at birth, but Crow people can be given several names throughout their lives to commemorate various events – we'll talk about the event where Osh-Tisch was given the name Osh-Tisch later on. Osh-Tisch is the only name we know that they had.

E: Okay.

A: So that's name we're going to use.

E: Yep. [laughs]

A: Um, to the best of my understanding Crow names aren't gendered, and I've found no mention of *batée* changing their names when they expressed their gender identity as being *batée* rather than male. Osh-Tisch is more correctly pronounced something like Ohchiish, which is a shortened form of the phrase Ohchikapdaapesh, which means 'Finds Them And Kills Them', pretty badass.

I: That's so metal, yeah!

A: Yeah.

[laughter]

A: It's a hardcore name. Um...

E: It's a hell of a thing to call someone when you just want them to come and like, eat the dinner.

[laughter]

I: Yeah.

A: I assume that's why they shortened it.

E: Are those like, two words? Like, Osh-Tisch? Or is that just like... just like a phonetic shortening?

A: I think it's a phonetic shortening.

E: Okay.

A: So the '-sh' ending is just an ending used when talking about people in third-person.

E: Okay.

A: And so 'Ohchii-' is the first syllable of Ohchi.... Ohchikapdaapesh.

E: Okay. Oh, I see, okay. Alright.

A: So yeah, it's really just a short... shortening. A phonetic shortening.

E: I love it.

[laughter]

A: But yeah, I'm using Osh-Tisch 'coz that's what they're most commonly called now and I want people to be able to find this podcast if they want information on Osh-Tisch.

Osh-Tisch said of their gender, that since birth they were, quote, "...inclined to be a woman, never a man" and also that, quote, "My Father and Mother did not like it. They used to whip me, take away my girl's clothes, and put boy's clothes on me. But I threw them away - and got girl's clothes and dolls to play with."

Despite their parents' reactions, Osh-Tisch's gender was a known and accepted one amongst the Crow, and as I've mentioned it's called *batée*, also sometimes written or said as *badé*, *bodé*, or *boté*. The most recent Crow dictionary uses *batée*, so that's what we're using.

E: Okay.

A: And we will see several examples later on of Crow people actively supporting Osh-Tisch in their gender identity and expression. However, the anthropologist S.C. Simms, in around 1900, notes that he had been told by Crow people that even if parents wanted their child to take on male rather than *batée* roles, the child would invariably resist, and the family would have to adjust accordingly, which suggests that Osh-Tisch's experience of their parents' wanting them to be male rather than be *batée* was one that did occur among Crow people.

I: Okay.

A: I don't know why. I've got no more information on that particular fact.

[laughter]

I: I mean, it's not even that weird that parents would have preferences along the kind of gender binary. Like, preference for male children is a thing.

A: Yeah. So for a bit more background on *batée* and on the terminology that we'll be using – *batée* is a specifically Crow term, but genders outside the male/female binary have existed and been documented in over 155 of the around 400 nations that occupied North America before Europe... before European settlement. The term generally used today - which now covers both gender and sexuality outside Western norms - for Indigenous people, is 'two-spirit'. That's come out of a recent effort over the last 40 years to revive these Indigenous identities.

I: What sexualities are we like, kind of sexuality experiences are we talking about here? When you say that can cover both gender and sexuality outside of like, Western...

A: So I'm including there gay Indigenous people might use 'two-spirit'.

I: Ah, okay. Okay.

A: And things like that. So when I say 'outside of Western norms' I mean like, cis and heteronormative...

I: Yeah.

A: ...Western norms.

I: Cool.

A: Not identities that we as Westerners understand within our culture.

I: Okay, yep. Cool.

A: Yep. So San Carlos Apache person Curtis Harris explains the use of 'two-spirit', saying, "We started to use this term because we didn't feel comfortable in many cases in simply defining ourselves by the colonizers' culture..." Some Indigenous people do reject the term 'two-spirit', seeing it as homogenising a wide variety of unique identities across many nations, as well as being linked with the romanticisation of Indigenous understandings of gender by non-Indigenous Americans. But it is the commonly... or the most commonly accepted term, and so where appropriate I'm going to use it.

I: Okay.

E: I wish we could find a two-spirit person to come and do an episode with us.

A: I wish we could, but I don't know if there would be a single two-spirit person in Australia. [laughs]

I: If you're...

A: There may be.

E: We have the Internet today.

A: It's true. And we do have Skype.

I: But if you're a two-spirit person in Australia, like, call us. [laughs]

A: Do, please. [laughs] We'd love to talk to you.

I: We'll make you cake.

E: [laughs]

A: We....

E: Yeah, we can't pay you, but we can make any cake.

[laughter]

I: Yep.

A: More specifically than 'two-spirit' the term 'third gender' is used when talking about Indigenous genders beyond the male/female binary. Sometimes this use is restricted to people assigned male at birth but fulfilling more female social roles, and 'fourth gender' is used for people assigned female at birth but fulfilling more male social roles. So I am gonna use those terms in that way occasionally just for clarity. 'Coz 'two-spirit' is a broader term, and 'third gender' is specifically what Osh-Tisch is

I: It does feel a little bit weird that we've made like, like, there's like a number ranking here.

A: Yeah. Which gender is first and which is second?

E: I mean...

A: I think we all...

I: I think we all know that answer to that.

[laughter]

I: I... yeah...

E: Not to get a little bit political on this queer podcast.

[laughter]

A: Yeah.

[laughter]

I: Anyway...

A: I mean I think what happened is they came up with 'third gender' first, for genders beyond the binary, and then people were like "This isn't all the one thing. We need another label."

E: Mm.

I: Yeah.

A: And then 'fourth gender'. And there is also 'fifth gender'. I'm not sure what exactly that's used for, but within some cultures there... they do use the term 'fifth gender'.

I: Okay. So it was more like the first two genders came a draw.

A: Well.... [laughs] Yeah.

E: I mean... in...

I: They did...

E: In like... terms of when they were invented I guess.

A: [laughs]

I: Yeah, I guess.

A: Yeah.

I: When they were like, labelled. Yeah. I dunno.

A: *Batéé* like Osh-Tisch are generally assigned male at birth, but recognised when they show a lack of interest in traditionally male activities, and an interest or skill in traditionally female activities.

I: I'm looking forward to hearing about the event that got Osh-Tisch the name Finds Them and Kills Them.

A: [laughs]

E: Me too. So much.

I: 'Cos I would very much, like, interpret 'find them and kill them' as a traditionally male activity. Or is it not for Crow people?

A: Uh... less so than we would think of it, but yeah, it's a largely traditionally male activity.

I: Okay.

A: We'll talk about it.

I: I'll wait and see, yep.

A: It's coming up. So the fur-trader Edwin T. Denig, who lived among and around Crow people for over 20 years in the early- mid-19th century, says that this recognising of people who had been assigned male at birth of actually being *batée* usually happens around the age of 12 or 14. Sometimes visions are also associated with somebody being recognised as a *batée*, although it seems that these visions serve usually as confirmation that a child is *batée* rather than a reason for people to decide they're *batée*.

E: Okay.

A: Osh-Tisch explained to US Lieutenant Hugh L. Scott that none of the *batée* who they had known had been directed by a spirit or a vision to become *batée*. And they said, quote "...they were born that way."

I: That's so interesting to me that Osh-Tisch said that.

A: I was so happy when I realised we had quotes from Osh-Tisch, like...

E: Yeah, it's really good.

A: ...I did not expect that at all.

I: Yeah.

A: But yeah, um... Lieutenant Hugh L. Scott interviewed Osh-Tisch about their gender!

E: How good!

I: Yeah!

[laughter]

A: It was great! And like, other people have quoted Osh-Tisch as well, but yeah, Lieutenant Hugh Scott was actively like, "I am a Westerner who doesn't understand your gender. What's going on?"

I: And you were like, "Me too!"

E: Yeah.

[laughter]

A: Yeah. Saaame, Hugh!

I: [laughs]

A: Osh-Tisch recalled knowing eight *batée* throughout their life.

E: So how big a community are we talking about here anyway?

A: I'm not entirely clear because among the Crow around the time Osh-Tisch was young I think there were around 10,000 Crow.

E: Mhm.

A: But Crow is an overarching term that includes several smaller groups. So there were River Crow and... I can't remember the other two.

I: I take it Osh-Tisch is River Crow then.



A: No, I don't know what Osh-Tisch is. I couldn't actually find that fact.

I: Oh! Okay.

A: So I'm not sure when Osh-Tisch knew eight *batée* if Osh-Tisch would have known all the *batée* among all the Crow, or if the eight *batée* Osh-Tisch knew are just within Osh-Tisch's small community.

E: Okay.

A: So I don't have a good kind of "percentage that are *batée*" number.

E: But I assume that knowing these people is restricted amongst like, the smaller or wider Crow community, as we're using the Crow-specific....

A: Yeah.

E: ...term, *batée*.

A: Yeah.

E: Okay.

A: Within Osh-Tisch's community, the *batée* generally pitched their lodges and lived as a distinct social group. Uh, when I say 'lodges', picture what we know as a tipi – that's the Lakota word – the Crow word is *ashé*.

E: Okay.

A: This community of *batée* referred to each other as sisters. During their life Osh-Tisch became recognised as the leader of this group, as well as becoming an important medicine person – so a healer and a spiritual leader among the Crow.

E: There's this definite thing in trans history where trans people are always the like, spiritual leaders in a community, and I wanna know why.

I: You're right, I've sort of...

E: Like....

I: ...seen this before.

E: Across like, many cultures, I mean.

A: Yeah. So among the Crow – and I don't have the quote that I had on this, but among the Crow *batée* are often associated with having an ability to mediate with spirits.

E: Mhm.

A: And I think that's also linked to the idea that because *batée* are neither male nor female...

E: Yeah.

A: ...they're more able to understand a wider variety of experiences.

E: I've seen this in regard to like, uh.... I can't remember, like Roman, um, priestesses who were assigned male at birth, where it's like, "Oh, because they were neither male nor female then they could like, play with line between life and death!"

I: [laughs]

E: And I was like, "Why don't I get that?"

[laughter]

A: Yeah, similar things are said about *batée*! Yeah.

I: Maybe you just haven't been playing with line between life and death.

E: I'm trying so... This is why I had a goth phase...

I: Ah.

[laughter]

E: ...as a teen.

A: Yeah, um, Osh-Tisch, in... I'm not sure at what point in their life, but in their youth Osh-Tisch had a vision of being taken by spirits and communicating with these spirits, and this is what led them to become a medicine person, so maybe you're just waiting on your vision.

I: I have to say, if I got a spiritual vision that told me what career to have...

A: I don't think the spirits were like, "Hey! Osh-Tisch! This is your job now." I think Osh-Tisch was like, "Oh, so I've communicated with spirits, and like, it makes sense that I now have this spiritual connection."

I: Okay.

E: Okay.

I: It was more like Osh-Tisch was like, "Cool! I have like..."

E: "...a skill here."

I: Yeah.

E: Not like, "I was visited by the career-counselling spirits."

[laughter]

I: Yes.

A: Yeah.

E: Mm.

A: Osh-Tisch's other skill – that we know of – is that they were renowned for their construction of ashé. We know this partly because they built the ashé of Iron Bull, who was a Crow chief around the 1870s and 1880s. The ethnographer Edward S. Curtis, who wrote about the Crow people in the early 1900s says it was common among the Crow to say that "Iron Bull's lodge is like the lodge of Sun." So it was a very, very impressive lodge. Lieutenant Scott stayed in Iron Bull's lodge in 1877, and he described it as "...the largest and finest lodge I have ever seen...."

I: So Osh-Tisch built great houses.

A: Yes.

I: Okay.

A: Yes.

I: Good.

E: Why is it so good?

A: Well, it's very big, for one thing. So Curtis writes that usually people will only use up to 18 buffalo hides to make an ashé, and to use any more is thought to offend the spirits, but Osh-Tisch had a vision of an ashé made of twenty hides, and so because they'd had this vision they...

E: Ah, I see.

A: ...knew it would be okay, and they made Iron Bull's ashé ultimately out of 25 hides. So it's very large and impressive, basically.

E: That's an extra five hides than the spirits showed you, but that's fine.

[laughter]

A: Yeah, I don't know how that went down with the spirits, but I think it was okay. The hide-tanning and sewing that are necessary to construct are skills practised by both women and *batée*. And women and *batée* share many other tasks within their community, including butchering buffalo, beading, cooking, and raising children. *Batée* also generally participate in women's rather than men's song and dance, but not always, and we'll talk about that a bit more later on. So in some cases *batée* have their unique roles.

I: Oh, okay.

E: Okay. But are they ever in the men's things?

A: Yes.

E: Or just never? They are.

A: Ah, I do have one reference.

E: Okay.

A: So, yes. I don't know much about it though.

E: Alright.

A: There are, however, differences in what's expected of each gender. So for example women are more involved with the care of infants, while *batée* devote more of their time to craft, 'coz they're not spending their time raising babies.

E: Mmkay.

A: Um, because of this, *batée* are often seen as being more skilled at things like make ashé, and they themselves often live in some of the best ashé in the community, and through their skills they were often very prosperous, and they were known for their charity to other members of the community.

In 1876, when Osh-Tisch is about 22, the Lakota and Northern Cheyenne – collectively known as the Sioux – were involved with what's known as the Great Sioux War of 1876 against the United States.

I: When you say 'Sioux', is it...

A: Yep.

I: ...that word that I've spent my whole life saying 'See-oox' about?

A: Yeah.

E: Ahh. [laughs]

A: S-I-O-U-X? Sioux.

I: Yeah, okay.

A: Yeah.

I: Cool.

E: Like Siouxsie Sioux.

A: It's French spelling, so...

I: Yep. That's alright. I was just making sure.

E: Oh, the French are responsible for this! [laughs]

A: [laughs] Yeah. [laughs]

I: I was just making sure.

A: It's a French spelling of the final syllable of a word that I think these people did call themselves?

E: Okay.

A: Or was used by someone to describe these people.

I: Okay.

E: Well, okay.

A: Yep. Yeah. So at this time Lakota and Cheyenne and Crow people are kind of on the frontier of US...

E: Yep.

A: ...advancement.

E: Okay.

A: And the Lakota and Cheyenne are at war with the US.

E: Oh no...

A: The Lakota and Cheyenne have been enemies of the Crow for many years, and they're often fighting over hunting grounds and so forth.

E: Yep.

A: Osh-Tisch was actually briefly taken prisoner by a Lakota war-party in their youth.

E: Oh wow.

I: [laughs]

A: Something I know nothing more about. [laughs]

E: Oh my God!

[laughter]

E: When you say 'in their youth', they're, like... they're 22 now! How "youth" were they?

A: I do not know.

I: [laughs]

E: Oh wow, okay.

A: That's all I know.

E: I've lived such a sheltered life.

[laughter]

E: But they're fine?

A: They're fine. They came back.

E: Yeah.

A: I'm not even sure how they came back – if the Lakota gave them back, or if they escaped. But they came back.

E: And you don't know like, how long for, or...

A: Nah.

[laughter]

E: I'm not satisfied!

A: I'm sorry, I know nothing! Um, Lillian Bullshows who I mentioned before...

E: Uh-huh.

I: ...just casually said this?

A: Yeah, she told a series of stories about Osh-Tisch, and one of them was, you know, in their youth Osh-Tisch was taken prisoner by a Lakota war-party, but they came back home!

E: Okay.

[laughter]

A: And I was like, "Lillian!"

[laughter]

E: So you're probably not gonna know this, but like, how common was the taking of prisoners? Were prisoners treated relatively well?

A: I know that the Crow treated prisoners quite well...

E: Okay.

A: ...in that I know of one woman – she's known as Woman Chief – who was taken prisoner by the Crow and later became a chief...

E: Okay.

A: ...hence her name...

E: Yeah.

A: ...among them.

E: Yep. Okay.

A: So she obviously was treated quite well.

E: So you could like, assimilate into the other group...

A: Yeah. But I don't know...

E: ...in some circumstances.

A: ...how Osh-Tisch would have been treated by the Lakota, or...

E: Okay, well. [laughs]

I: I mean...

A: [laughs]

I: ...I feel like if you're in like, an ongoing war, it would be weird for one party to treat the prisoners well, and the other not to...

E: Yeah.

A: I don't...

I: ...because...

A: I don't know whether Woman Chief was Lakota. I can't remember...

I: Okay.

A: ...where Woman Chief was originally from.

I: Okay.

E: Okay.

I: That's alright, go on.

E: Alright, well I'll just remain unsatisfied I suppose.

[laughter]

A: I'm sorry.

E: It's not your fault.

A: So yeah, the Crow and the Lakota were long-time enemies. On the other hand, Crow generally maintained good relations with the United States, because they saw this as the best way to maintain some control over their lands. Based on these pre-existing relations, when the US General Crook asked the Crow to assist him in his fight against the Lakota and Cheyenne, the Crow people contributed about 175 warriors to his cause. And this included Osh-Tisch, as well as a woman called The Other Magpie

I: So women warriors were fairly normal in this context, or was The Other Magpie a weird one?

A: It was unusual but not unheard of for a woman...

I: Okay.

A: ...to be a warrior. So there are some other references – like I mentioned, Woman Chief was a warrior.

I: Yep.

A: And there are a few other references to female warriors, but it is noted by Crow people who knew her that it was unusual.

E: Okay.

I: Okay.

A: But it could happen.

E: Okay.

A: Crow medicine woman Pretty Shield – who knew Osh-Tisch and The Other Magpie – described The Other Magpie as a, quote “...wild one who had no man of her own. She was both bad and brave ... and she was pretty.”

E: Wow.

I: She sounds great.

[laughter]

A: I love The Other Magpie.

I: I love her.

A: There are also reference to other *batée* warriors existing as well as Osh-Tisch. We know that The Other Magpie joined this war-party because her brother had been killed by the Lakota and she was seeking revenge. We have no idea what Osh-Tisch's motivation for this was.

I: Okay.

A: On the morning of the 17th of June, Crook's forces, along with Crow and also Shoshone allies, stopped to rest by the Rosebud Creek. Crook sat down to play cards with his officers, when the Lakota and Cheyenne attacked with almost a thousand warriors. So Crook also has a force of about a thousand people.

E: Okay.

I: That's a big number of warriors.

A: Yeah, yeah.

E: More warriors than I have.

[laughter]

A: I would lose this war.

E: I would lose this war too.

I: Yup.

A: So luckily for Crook, Crow and Shoshone scouts had been able to sound the alarm and delay the Lakota and Cheyenne, allowing US forces to stop playing cards and to gather to defend themselves. A US participant in the battle reports, "If it had not been for the Crows, the Sioux would have killed half our command before the soldiers were in position to meet the attack." Pretty Shield talks about Osh-Tisch's role in the battle, and I'm gonna read quite a long quote here, partly because it's also talking about Osh-Tisch's gender, and I think it's quite interesting what Pretty Shield has to say. So Pretty Shield says, "A Crow woman fought with Three Stars [which is the name they use for Crook] on the Rosebud. Two women did, for that matter. But one of them was neither a man nor a woman. She looked like a man, and yet she wore women's clothing, and she had the heart of a woman. Besides, she did a woman's work. Her name was Finds Them And Kills Them. She was not a man, and yet not a woman. She was not as strong as a man, and yet she was wiser than a woman."

I: That is indeed an interesting thing about gender.

A: Yep.

I: I...am interested that the, like, dichotomy with men and women here is "the strong gender" and "the wise gender".

A: Yeah.

I: Like, our kind of set-up is, the strong wise gender, and... you guys, I guess.

[laughter]

E: Yeah.

A: That other gender. Yeah. Women, not talking about wisdom, but women in Crow society were quite powerful and able to do more things than Western women generally were at the time, so for example, it was a woman who owned an ashê.

I: Oh, okay.

E: Oh, okay.

A: So a woman not only ran the household, but she owned the household.

E: And she just like, let...

I: Let a man in?

E: Let a man live there, maybe?



A: Yeah, yeah.

E: Okay.

A: And things like that. So women were more powerful in society than Western women were.

I: Okay, okay.

A: Pretty Shield also mentioned that Osh-Tisch wore men's clothing into battle that day.

I: Is this one of those...possibly a practicality thing?

A: No, Pretty Shield actually gives an interesting reason for this.

I: Okay.

A: So what she says is that, if Osh-Tisch was killed, they didn't want the Lakota to find them in women's clothing and to think they were a man dressed as a woman.

I: Ah, okay.

A: This is interesting because the Lakota also have a concept of a third gender, similar to *batée*, that was called *winkte*, and *winkte* were known to fight in wars and also to wear female clothing.

E: Oh okay

A: Though I'm not sure what dress they wore into battle. The Lakota and Crow people even shared a word for *batée* and *winkte*, in Plains Sign Language, which was the lingua franca amongst many, many people in North America at the time.

E: Wait, what, sign language?

A: Yeah. Plains Sign Language, so--

E: What??!!

A: Yeah, it stretched from up in Canada to like, literally down in Mexico.

E: So I knew that there were...sign languages, but I didn't know that they were like...

I: Common tongue?

E: The lingua franca. Yeah.

A: Yeah.

E: That's amazing.

A: Across the Great Plains, the common language is Plains Sign Language.

E: I'm so happy.

A: Yeah.

E: That's so good! How did this happen? Tell me more things...that you probably don't know.

A: I know that it was spoken.... uh, I just know some facts about how many people spoke it, so, forty different spoken languages all shared Plains Sign Language as their common language to talk to each other.

E: I wonder how this happened.

A: I dunno. Lieutenant Scott was an expert in it, he studied it.

E: Okay.

A: Hugh, who we met before.

E: Yes, I remember him.

A: [laughs] Um, yeah, I don't know much about it, but it still exists.

I: Imagine if that was in fantasy novels. Imagine if common tongue was a sign language.

E: Wow, if I could be bothered developing a fantasy universe, the places it would go.

[laughter]

I: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

E: People, if you did have a like, fantasy universe, and you were like, yeah, the common tongue isn't English, it's a sign language, people would be like, "That's absolute nonsense, that would never happen..."

A: Yeah.

E: "This is some SJW stuff." [laughs]

I: Yeah.

A: Yeah, yeah. No, it's real!

I: Is it still around?

A: Yeah, it is still around. Yeah, it was used within specific nations as well, to...in certain contexts, some storytelling, and some ceremonies and stuff were done in Plains Sign Language.

I: Okay.

A: So yeah, and it still exists today. I wish I knew more facts.

E: So being deaf is just a chill, fun time, at this time.

A: Yeah, being...

I: [laughs]

A: I guess so, yeah, like, everyone speaks sign language. Yeah.

E: Well, how convenient.

I: Cool, yes.

[happy laughter]

A: So, um, in Plains Sign Language, there is a word for third gender.

E: Okay.

A: And it's derived from the sign for half, followed by the sign for man, then the sign for women.

E: That makes sense.

I: Yep.

E: Is there any...like, are there resources on the internet of people showing you what that looks like.

A: Um, I assume there are, because I did read verbal descriptions of what it looks like. So the sign for woman is apparently combing your hair, and the sign for man is an erect finger.

E: Okay.

I: [laughter]

A: I assume they used the word erect to imply erect penis. That's what I read.

E: An erect finger.

[very mature laughter]

E: Good.

A: So yeah, you probably could find video of people showing you this.

E: Do you know what the sign for half was?

A: No, that's all I know.

I: We'll look in to it.

E: 'Cos we were so close.

A: We were so close, yes. So, um, yeah, the Crow and the Lakota would've shared this word.

E: Okay.

A: And presumably Osh-Tisch knew that Lakota winkte existed, so I'm not really sure what's going on here.

I: Yeah...

E: Okay.

A: It may be that winkte wore male clothing in to battle.

E: Okay

A: That's a possibility. But I really don't know.

E: So what could happen if they found them and they were perceived as a man in women's clothing?

A: Um...

E: Like what are they afraid of happening?

A: I don't really know. Pretty Shield didn't really elaborate on what they thought would happen. I think they were just afraid of being misunderstood.

E: Oh, I see, okay. I don't know where to go with this.

A: Yeah, I don't. We're lacking some key data here I think, but I thought it was interesting.

E: I mean, yeah, I guess if the Lakota would've worn male clothes into battle, regardless of gender, then it could make sense.

A: Yeah.

E: Well, I'll make myself like, culturally intelligible in this setting, and I will also wear male clothing into battle.

A: Yeah, maybe.

E: Maybe. So what are, what are clothes like? What are female clothes like? Like are they...

A: Um...

E: 'Cos you were saying that it's not a matter of practicality.

A: So clothes are generally...we do have pictures of Osh-Tisch wearing female clothes, and in the context I've seen that's a long dress.

E: Okay.

A: But I understand that women also sometimes wore shorter dresses and leggings, and men also wore tunics and leggings.

E: Okay.

A: And I'm not clear on the difference between a short dress and a tunic, but I'm sure it was obvious at the time.

E: Yeah, but in terms of mobility maybe there's not too much difference between a short dress and a tunic?

A: Yeah. I mean, I guess not. Yeah. And I'm not sure what somebody like The Other Magpie wore into battle. So, Osh-Tisch distinguished themselves during the battle, and Pretty Shield tells one particular story, in which a Crow warrior called Bull Snake's horse was shot out from beneath him by a Lakota, and Bull Snake fell off the horse and fell to the ground.

E: As you would.

A: As you would. And Osh-Tisch raced up to him, got off their own horse and stood over Bull Snake to protect him. To quote Pretty Shield, "shooting at the Lakota as rapidly and she could load her gun and fire", and this saved Bull Snake's life. The Other Magpie was also there. She rode into battle on her black horse, wearing war paint and a stuffed woodpecker on her head.

I: I love her so much.

A: She sounds very fearsome.

I: Yeah, she does.

A: And while Osh-Tisch was standing here protecting Bull Snake, The Other Magpie rode around the Lakota singing war songs and striking them with her coup stick. So a coup stick is a stick which you mark to measure acts of bravery in war, so you count coup on the stick, and one of those acts of bravery can include going up to the enemy and touching them with the stick and escaping unharmed. Pretty Shield also comments that The Other Magpie's medicine was strong enough that

she was able to just ride up to the Lakota and wave her coup stick and they would retreat. I don't know how to translate medicine in this context, but you know, obviously some power within her and her coup stick that can drive off enemies.

I: I mean, what we've understood about The Other Magpie so far is that she is like a strong and fearsome person.

A: If The Other Magpie rode up to me I would ride away.

I: Yeah, I would retreat.

E: There's no question that any of us could take on The Other Magpie.

[laughs]

I: Yeah. The Other Magpie would take us all prisoner.

A: That is true. Yeah. Pretty Shield also talks about Osh-Tisch and The Other Magpie teaming up at other points in the battle to bring down Lakota warriors together.

I: There should be a movie about them.

E: I was gonna say, is there a movie about this, and then I didn't, because I was like, "Even if there is, it's definitely offensive."

[laughter]

A: Yeah, and I doubt it features Osh-Tisch. It could feature a woman in battle, but I doubt it features The Other Magpie, complete with woodpecker, and Osh-Tisch.

I: The woodpecker is so important.

A: Yeah. How do you keep a woodpecker affixed to your head while fighting in a battle?

I: Like, a chinstrap attached to its wings.

A: It must be a very good strap.

E: You can make things.

I: [laughs] You can keep a hat on your head in battle.

A: Yeah, I guess if you picture more of a... I'm just thinking, the weight of a woodpecker, you know...

I: I, yeah, very much pictured kind of like, the woodpecker lying on your head with its wings...

E: Oh, that makes sense.

I: ...going down like this... Then you can have a strap to attach it under your chin!

A: I imagined it just sitting upright on her head... [laughs]

I: No, I pictured it like, lying on her head.

A: There might be photos of like, other...

I: I was gonna say, maybe people from the Crow nation still know how appropriately to wear a woodpecker on your head?

A: Yeah, there might be photos of other Crow people wearing birds on their heads.

E: I mean, was this like, a common thing, or was this just this one person...

A: I don't know.

E: ...who was like, "You know what would be absolutely baller?"

[laughter]

A: I don't know. [laughs] It's through the battle at the Rosebud where Osh-Tisch shot down many Lakota, that they earned their name, Finds Them And Kills Them.

E: Okay.

I: True.

A: So now you know. After six hours the Lakota and Cheyenne fought the US, Crow, and Shoshone forces to a standstill, but eventually retreated when US reinforcements arrived, and most of the Crow returned to their village the following day. They didn't continue to participate in the war. Pretty Shield described the return of Crow warriors to their village as, quote, "one of the finest sights I've ever seen," and added, "I felt proud of the two women, even the wild one" so, The Other Magpie, and "there was great rejoicing." I thought it was interesting that she said "even the wild one", so it seems that she saw The Other Magpie as behaving more outside of social norms than Osh-Tisch.

E: Mmkay.

I: I mean, Osh-Tisch seems to be perceived as like, I mean, like you said in the sign, like half woman, half man, so I guess there might be more space for Osh-Tisch to do something that's perceived as a more like, male activity?

A: Yeah, I think that's what's happening here. Yeah. I don't really know much about how much *batée* fought in wars, I do know of a couple of other *batée* that did fight in wars, but it seems like it was a pretty acceptable and normal activity for a *batée*. There's a photo taken of Osh-Tisch the following year, so in 1877, when they were around 23. They're very well dressed, showing that they already had a high standing in their community, possibly elevated by their deeds at the battle of the Rosebud. In this photo, Osh-Tisch is sitting beside a woman that was identified by the photographer as their wife.

E: Aww.

A: For the record, to give you an idea of how much the photographer knew, this photo is captioned "Squaw Jim and his squaw".

E: Oh God.

A: And this is the only record we have of Osh-Tisch having a wife. So I'm not...

E: So like, nah.

A: So like, nah, is what I'm thinking here.

E: [laughing] Okay. I was about to be like, “Oh, a wife, how nice”, but...It’s a lie!

A: It’s probably a lie. Ah, we’re not sure anything about the identity of this woman. The scholar Will Roscoe speculates that the woman may be The Other Magpie, since she’s the woman we know of most closely associated with Osh-Tisch at this time in their life.

E: Okay.

A: But, we dunno.

I: But like, reasonably, Osh-Tisch probably had a bunch of female friends or...

A: Yeah.

I: Or...partners, or whatever, I don’t know.

E: Or was just happening...happened to stand next to a woman one day when a photo-grapher was there.

I: Yeah.

E: A photo-grapher, a photographer even.

A: And like, these photographs taken by white photographers of Indigenous people are often very staged.

E: Yeah.

A: So you know, the photographer may have grabbed Osh-Tisch and grabbed a woman and been like, “Sit together, okay. Oh look, this was a nice Indian married couple!”

E: Yeah.

A: Like, we just dunno. Years later, Osh-Tisch would tell Lieutenant Scott that they themselves had never married, but that they knew other *batée* who had, or who, to quote Scott, “did everything women did”.

E: Okay, so would it have been more normal for them to have married a man?

A: Yeah, yeah, so *batée* generally marry and have sexual relationships with men.

E: Okay. Do they ever have relationships with women?

A: Not that I found any record of.

E: Okay. So wife thing looking more suspicious.

A: Wife thing looking unlikely. So Doctor A. B. Holder, the US physician to the Crow in the 1880s, met Osh-Tisch in 1889, and recorded that they had, quote, “lived for two years as the female party to a marital partnership with a well-known Indian male”, and Holder also notes that having relationships with men is the norm for *batée*, and Osh-Tisch told Holder that they had never had sex with a woman. So wife thing is looking increasingly unlikely.

E: Okay, so the wife thing is pretty like, open and shut...

A: Yeah, but there’s potentially a husband here. Yeah, Holder describes him as a well-known Indian male, but I don’t know who that was.

E: Alright, well that's not a lot of information is it?

A: No. [laughs]

E: I hope they were very happy together.

A: For those two years.

I: [laughs] Yeah.

A: None of the other sources on Osh-Tisch mentioned them having a partner, so, I dunno. Holder also adds, quote, "He is" (he referring to Osh-Tisch here) "he is like the female members of this tribe, ready to accommodate any male desiring his services".

E: What?

A: So, Crow, obviously, as a different culture, have different ideas about, y'know, what sex is appropriate and when to what we do, and European anthropologists or doctors or whatever like Holder often failed to recognise Crow marriages and what Crow relationships were going on.

E: Mhm.

A: So it may be that these "services" that Holder is talking about were taking place within relationships that he just didn't recognise, or it may be that people were just more free about having sex than people like Holder were. I don't really know. But Holder's understanding was that Crow were just kinda sleeping with everyone.

E: I see.

A: And specifically that *batée* were, according to Holder and some other anthropologists, performing oral sex on men.

I: I mean, it sounds likely that *batée* performed oral sex on men sometimes.

A: Yeah, yeah. Like, I believe that could've happened. That seems very probable.

E: He just makes it sound like anyone could go up to them and be like, "So like...now? Or...?"

A: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah. He does. And I'm not clear what the real norms surrounding that were.

E: Well let's not trust the white doctor.

A: Yeah. I would trust the white doctor.

I: Yeah, he sounds confused.

A: Holder seems usually pretty well-intentioned, but he doesn't know what he's talking about.

E: Yeah, I mean I think well-intentioned but doesn't know what they're talking about is like, about as good as white sources from then are going to get.

A: Yeah, I think so.

E: Which sucks.

A: Yeah. Talking about *batée* marriages, other Crow people have told anthropologists more recently, so in the second half of the 20th century, that a man married to a *batée* might be teased since *batée* are seen as being very productive, as we've mentioned, and very good providers for their families,



and so their husbands are seen as lazy, and kind of wanting a partner who keeps their house and provides for them.

I: So the deal there is that the *batée* is seen as performing sort of, two gender roles and the husband who's got the *batée* is like, "Great, I don't have to do the man thing or the woman thing! I'm gonna have a nap."

A: [laughing] Yeah, that's kind of what's implied there.

E: Okay.

I: Right, I see.

E: Alright, that was like, not as bad a comment as I feared it would be.

A: Yeah.

E: In terms of like, a stereotype that could've happened, I guess?

A: Like, the stereotype that seems to exist in Crow culture about *batée* is that they're just really good at everything. Like, as neither a man nor a woman, they're good at both male and female tasks.

E: I see.

A: And *batée*, I think I've mentioned, are seen as being better than women at a lot of traditionally female tasks like crafts.

E: Is this going back to the because they don't have to look after babies?

A: I think so, yeah. It's just that that's what....

E: It's just like, they have the time.

A: Yeah.

E: To become amazing at things.

A: Yeah, I think so. When A B Holder, the doctor, met Osh\_Tisch, he paid Osh\_Tisch to undergo a medical examination. And he writes a description of them, so, to quote, Osh-Tisch is "a splendidly formed fellow of prepossessing face, in perfect health, active in movement, and happy in disposition. He's five foot eight inches high."

I: That's the same height as me!

A: Well, there you go, you and Osh-Tisch are the same height.

E: Stand up, Irene.

[chair scraping]

A: [laughs]

E: Okay. I have considered.

I: Would I be fearsome in battle?

A: I dunno.

E: I mean, I'm sure you could be.

[laughter]

A: You might need a woodpecker to add a few inches.

I: Yeah, I think so.

A: [laughing] Yep. "He's five foot eight inches high, weighs 158 pounds and has a frank, intelligent face.

I: They obviously had a lot more muscle than me.

A: Yeah. Osh-Tisch is quite broad.

E: Mm.

I: Okay. I'll be intimidated if I time travel and meet them.

A: Good.

E: Please then do an interview where you ask them about many things, including what happened when they were a prisoner of war as a kid?

[laughter]

A: And why they wore men's clothing into battle.

I: I'm obviously going to have to like, learn...

E: Plains Sign Language?

I: Yeah.

A: [laughs]

E: Good.

A: And to end this quote, "he is 33 years of age, and has worn women's dress for 28 years".

E: Okay. First things first. Paid them to undergo a medical examination? Is that something that we should feel weird about, or was this fine?

A: Well, I thought about this a lot, and from reading Holder's writing, he seems very well intentioned, and so he talks about, in a minute I was gonna talk about, he um, also he examines Osh-Tisch's genitals, and he talks about how he kind of talked to Osh-Tisch, and Osh-Tisch was quite shy about this, and they had a conversation about it, and Osh-Tisch was like, "Look, don't like, talk to my community about what my biology is, but I'll undergo this medical examination."

E: Okay...

A: Like, I don't know if this was dubious, but Holder presents it in a way where he seems to be respecting Osh-Tisch.

E: Okay, and then is it just like, hey, I'm gonna ask you to like, I dunno, [laughs] do push-ups or whatever, I should compensate you for your time?

A: Yeah.

E: In terms of paying them.

A: Yeah, yeah.

I: Okay.

A: It seems more like that, but obviously we can't know for sure, but yeah.

I: Yeah, that's very like, it could be horribly exploitative, or it could also be that thing where when you're at uni, you go and do a psych experiment and they give you \$20 and a snack.

[laughter]

A: Yeah, and Holder presents it more as the second one, but as I mention, Holder in his examination also examines Osh-Tisch's genitals, and he notes that Osh-Tisch is quite shy about this, and tells him that nobody has seen their genitals since they were a child, even women they've known for a long time.

E: Okay. Would that've been unusual, in their community? Like did people...

A: I don't know.

E: ...bathe in communal environments or anything like that?

A: I'm not really sure. Uh, when I was writing this down I was thinking about this from the perspective of like, what partners they had in their life and stuff, so I didn't really think about things like communal bathing. So I dunno.

E: Okay. But like, maybe no husband?

A: I mean...

E: Or maybe no husband they're having sex with?

A: Yeah.

E: Maybe no husband they're having certain types of sex with? [laughs]

A: Yeah, I think all you can say is maybe no husband they're having certain types of sex with.

I: Maybe they just only have sex in the dark.

A: Maybe they do.

E: I mean, that's a bit loopholey, but I'll allow it.

[laughter]

A: I dunno. Around the time following the Battle of the Rosebud, the 1870s and 1880s was a time of very rapid change for the Crow, with more and more white settlers arriving in the area. Following a series of treaties and both voluntary and compulsory sale of their land, Crow lands were diminished drastically in size, and the Crow people ended up living on the Crow reservation under the control of a US agent who represented the US government. Osh-Tisch received an allotment of land on the reservation, and the 1880s census records show them living at the head of their ashé along with a brother, niece, nephew, and others.

I: So as the head of their ashé they like, that's a woman's position, essentially.

A: Yeah, that's a woman's position, and that means that Osh-Tisch owns the ashé.

I: Yeah.

E: Presumably, they also made it and it's beautiful, so that's fair...

[laughter]

A: Yeah, I think they probably did make it, yeah.

E: And it is beautiful!

A: And it would be beautiful. By 1891, Osh-Tisch was living alone except for an adopted three-year-old child, known as Brings Horses Well Known. Interestingly, the 1891 census records Brings Horses Well Known as a boy, but the 1895 census records them as a girl.

E: I see...

I: So it's likely that what's happened here is that Osh-Tisch has adopted the child because they're like, well you probably have the same gender identity?

A: Maybe so, or maybe it just happens that the child is a *batée* and that Osh-Tisch has adopted them. I don't know if those things are connected or not. But yeah, that's a possibility.

I: Yeah, that they've adopted them in a like, I feel like I have experience to give this child...

A: Yeah, especially at this time as there's more European influence and *batée* is becoming less acceptable and more persecuted as an identity. Yeah, that's a possibility, yeah. Um, I don't know much about Brings Horses Well Known. They lived with Osh-Tisch until at least 1904, when they would've been 16, but that's the last that I found. Despite having very little violent conflict with the USA, US ideology didn't accommodate Crow culture, unsurprisingly, and preached assimilation with US culture. So Crow parents were forced to send their children to government-run boarding schools, and at these schools, native customs and languages were banned, and obviously this includes the expression of *batée* gender.

E: How long did that go on for?

A: So this would've started in about the 1880s, I think.

E: Okay.

A: And in the early 1900s, there was a day school set up on the reservation.

E: Okay.

A: And so kids were able to go to that school and still live with their families.

E: Mmkay, but is that just for the Crow specifically? Did that go on more broadly?

A: I assume that continued for longer for other people. The Crow actively went out and sought someone to help them start a day school on the reservation.

E: Okay.

A So yeah, this probably continued for much longer for other people. I dunno.

E: Did here.

I: Yeah, it certainly did.

A: Yeah, and I think it's probably quite similar. Yeah... So Holder writes of a Crow *batée* at one of these schools found dressing in female clothing, in the late 1880s, and reports that they were punished, but that this kid eventually managed to escape from the school and live as a *batée* elsewhere.

E: Well I'm glad they got out at least.

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

A: Yeah. And obviously the behaviour of Crow adults was policed in different ways, but similarly policed.

E: Yeah.

A: Under US agent Briscoe in the 1890s, Osh-Tisch, along with other *batée*, was imprisoned, their hair was cut, and they were forced to do manual labour and also to wear male clothing.

E: Oh!

I: Colonists are bad.

A: Yeah.

E: Terrible, some might even say.

A: Yeah.

E: Oh.

A: Crow historian Joe Medicine Crow talks about this incident and he describes Osh-Tisch as the most respected *batée* and obviously the treatment of them and other *batée* was considered untenable by the Crow. Joe Medicine Crow says, "The people were so upset by this that chief Pretty Eagle came into Crow Agency and told Briscoe to leave the reservation. It was a tragedy trying to change them. Briscoe was crazy."

I: Yup.

A: And I'm not sure if it was directly as a result of this, but Briscoe did eventually leave. And Osh-Tisch had quite a good relationship with several subsequent Crow Agents including an Agent Reynolds, whose daughter Caroline remembers Osh-Tisch in her memoirs as a regular visitor to their home who was pleasant and good-natured. Caroline's attitude to Osh-Tisch's gender is also quite interesting. So when she first writes about Osh-Tisch, she describes them as, quote, "An unfortunate soul who was probably glad to get away from his native tribe and go visiting", assuming that Osh-Tisch has been forcibly dressed in women's clothing by the Crow because they've failed in some way to meet Crow standards of manliness. But Caroline does also comment that Osh-Tisch is, quote, "Good natured about this insult".

I: So Caroline as just fundamentally misunderstood this situation.

[laughter]

A: She has, but interestingly, after her memoir goes to the publisher, the publisher has a note that they've written, um, that says that Caroline continued her research after the publication of the memoir and concluded that no Crow mother would force crossdressing on their child as she assumed had been forced on Osh-Tisch because she thinks that would be, quote, "contrary to the free and easy life", end quote, of the Crow. And she discovers that according to Osh-Tisch's friends, they dress as a woman because they want to.

E: You had access to their friends and you didn't ask them immediately?

[laughter]

I: Didn't ask them before you sent the memoir to the publisher?

A: I guess not. Yeah.

I: Still, I'm glad she figured that out.

A: Yeah, I was quite impressed that Caroline figured that out. Good work, Caroline. So as I mentioned before when we were talking about schools, in 1902 the Crow invited Baptist minister Reverend William A. Petzoldt to come to the Crow reservation to help found a day school, which would allow children to return to their families rather than spending all their time in government boarding schools. And Petzoldt formed close relationships with many Crow people, but he also denounced many aspects of their culture, including *batée*. And he encouraged members of his congregation to stay away from Osh-Tisch and other *batée*. Crow Medicine Man Thomas Yellowtail suggests that Petzoldt's continued condemnation of Osh-Tisch is probably the reason why there were no *batée* after Osh-Tisch. So it's not clear exactly what Thomas Yellowtail means by this statement that there were no *batée* after Osh-Tisch, and he might have been specifically talking about there being no *batée* fulfilling all their traditional ceremonial roles. Specifically, this includes felling the tree which was used as the central pole in the sundance lodge in the religious ceremony known as the sundance. The sundance was banned in the 1880s and not revived until the 1940s, and when it was revived it was revived in a form more based off Shoshone traditions and there was no *batée* role within the revived sundance.

E: Okay.

I: When you talked before about, it was fairly early on, you talked about like Indigenous attempts to revive these traditional gender identities and that kind of thing, is there any effort to put the *batée* back in the sundance?

E: Or similar things I suppose?

I: Yeah.

A: I mean, there are Crow people who identify as *batée* now, since that revival I mentioned which started in about the '80s, but I didn't come across anything about them being put back in the sundance so I'm not sure.

I: Okay.

A: I don't know, it's a good question. In 1914, Agent Evan W. Estep, I don't know if that's how you say his name.

E: Who cares.

A: He arrived on the Crow reservation. And Estep had Osh-Tisch dragged into his office, where he told them that they were a man, and that they needed to stop acting as a woman.

I: I can't just, I mean, I know people are like this apparently. But why is he so invested in what other adults do with their time?

A: Yeah I've got no answer for why people are like this.

I: People are just like this.

A: So when this happened Osh-Tisch was obviously distraught. But luckily, friends were aware of what was happening, and they went and informed Chief Plenty Coups. Plenty Coup came to help Osh-Tisch and found them crying outside Estep's office.

I & E: Aww.

A: And Plenty Coup went in and told Estep to back off, or quote "When I get out of this office, you're going to leave. Within two hours, you're fired".

I: I love that he went and like fired the like, white Agent that looks over them.

A: Yeah.

[laughter]

E: Did that just happen?

A: No. He was just like, I don't care, I'm firing you.

E: Alright. I'm so glad that they at least have a community that's like, this is not on.

All: Yeah.

A: No that's right.

I: Their friends were obviously looking out for them too, in terms of like Caroline as well, they obviously had that conversation and cleared things up for her.

A: That's true yeah, their friends obviously spoke to Caroline and were like, you've got this wrong.

E: Yeah.

A: I don't know if Caroline sought out that conversation or if-

E: They showed up and were like we need to talk.

A: You published a memoir.

[laughter]

E: The memoir is bad.

A: Yeah. Plenty Coup also said to Estep, talking about Osh-Tisch, "In her youth, she didn't go for the men", so meaning the men's activities and men's ways, "She dressed like a woman and still she is dressed. I want it that way. She is kind to people, she's good natured, she goes to dances and takes part in every activity".

E: Aww.

A: Obviously they saw them as a very important part of the community and they looked after them.

E: [softly] How it should be.

A: How it should be.

I: Yes.

E: So, does the white man go away, does he get fired?

A: He doesn't get fired, but apparently he and Plenty Coup came to you know, an understanding, and Estep relented and Osh-Tisch was able to continue living as they wanted to.

E: Oh good.

A: So Estep was frightened of Plenty Coup.

E: Correct.

[laughter]

A: Yes. So when Lieutenant Scott visited the Crow in 1919 he found that Osh-Tisch was still wearing women's clothes, and still had a female hairstyle and presenting as a *batée* would. He describes Osh-Tisch's enviable position in their community, which he credits to their skills as a craftsperson, and Scott also says "She was most jolly, had a simple air of complete satisfaction with herself".

I: Aww.

E: That's good.

I: That's so nice.

A: Yeah. When Scott visited them, Osh-Tisch was recovering from blood poisoning, which they had-

I: What?!

E: Is this another one of those things that just sort of happens and we don't get to hear about it?

A: Yeah, we only hear about this because Scott turned up and found them being like, yeah I thought I was going to die but actually I got better.

E: Yay?!

I: Yay.

[laughter]

E: So, they had blood poisoning.

A: They had blood poisoning. But they thought they would die, but they didn't die, but it did mean that they had prepared would they would wear-

E: For being dead.

A: For being dead.

E: I see.

A: So they showed Scott the dress they had prepared.



E: So they were like hey I thought I was going to die but I didn't and now I have this lovely dress, do you want to see it? And Scott's like, sure!

[laughter]

I: Want to see what I was going to wear to my funeral, Lieutenant?

A: That's basically it yeah. So it's a woman's dress. It's a dark blue dress, and it's ornamented with abalone shells.

E: That sounds nice.

A: And we have a photo of them in the dress.

I: Aww.

E: ...Alive?

A: Yes, yes alive.

[laughter]

E: Oh okay. Okay, good, good. I look forward to seeing this photo.

A: In their later life, Osh-Tisch maintained a large network of friends among the Crow people and also among neighbouring nations. They gained a reputation as being the best poker player in the region.

[laughter]

A: Lillian Bullshows? remembers Osh-Tisch visiting her mother to cook and play cards. And that Osh-Tisch always brought apples, oranges and other sweets to give to Lillian and her brother. And she also recalls that they were a very good cook, and that they would often sing while baking. Their favourite songs were from the beaver dance, and Lillian notes that in this dance, which was a dance participated in by all genders, Osh-Tisch would sometimes wear men's clothing.

E: Okay. Have we talked about anything that Osh-Tisch wasn't good at yet?

A: No.

I: Osh-Tisch is a Mary Sue.

[laughter]

E: Osh-Tisch is a Mary Sue.

A: Osh-Tisch is just great at everything. We're going to talk more about another thing Osh-Tisch is great at now.

E: Okay, good.

A: As well as traditional Crow crafts which we already know that Osh-Tisch is great at, in 1926 they also won a ribbon at the Yellowstone County Fair for their hand-sewn quilts.

E: That's like, in line with previous talents we knew they had.

A: Yeah, like their talents are now in line with what we know about them.

E: That's unsurprising.

A: And they also got prizes for their collection of roots, berries and meats prepared and dried with traditional techniques.

E: Cool.

I: I like the Yellowstone County Fair was giving out a prize for this.

A: Yeah, I guess it was.

I: Okay.

E: Could people enter this if they weren't Indigenous?

A: I do not know.

E: Okay.

I: Yeah, this is a slightly odd situation. Like who runs that competition, who judges it?

E: What is this?

[laughter]

A: I don't know. I didn't Google the Yellowstone County Fair, I was just like, aww, they won some prizes, that's nice.

I: Okay, okay.

A: So that was in 1926, that they won-

E: This county fair!

A: This county fair. Two years later in 1928, they became quite sick and they spent much of that year in hospital, and Lillian mentioned visiting them in hospital. And they died on January the 2nd 1929, aged 75.

E: That's a reasonable human age. I am glad that they attained it.

A: Yeah, a long and good life.

I: Yes.

A: So now we've got to the end of this story, I do want to quickly ask you, how do you feel about the choice of they/them pronouns? Because I thought about this a lot.

I: I don't feel like 'they' was a bad choice, I feel like she would have also been a defensible choice.

A: Yeah, I feel like 'she' would have also been a valid choice.

E: Yeah.

A: I think most of the fact of why it's difficult is because it's all in translation basically, and it's in translation from a language that does not have the words she, him and they.

E: Yeah.

I: In Osh-Tisch's own language this was not-

E: A discussion.

A: Yeah. This choice never had to happen.

E: But definitely not he, @ the sources that described them like that.

A: Yeah. One of my major sources I used for this was Will Roscoe. So Will Roscoe is a white scholar, but he has worked very closely with Indigenous people and there is a preface at the start of his work of a gay Indigenous man, Randy Burns, who is endorsing his work and saying that he was originally quite sceptical about this white man writing about Indigenous genders but he's come round to it and he thinks that Roscoe has done good work.

E: Okay.

A: But Roscoe did use he/him pronouns for Osh-Tisch.

E: Oh, okay.

I: Okay, Roscoe.

A: And the reason he explained that he did this was because he said Osh-Tisch's biology, being assigned male at birth was always a known fact to their community.

E: Okay.

A: And he justified this as a reason to use male pronouns, which-

E: Why does that trump literally everything else? I guess-

I: I was going to say, I don't follow this logic.

A: No. I don't think it's very logical, because I think you know, as much as Roscoe tries to talk about you know, gender and obviously how gender is separate to sex, he's kind of just gone back to the idea that gender and sex are really the same in that point.

E: Like, unless what he's trying to argue is that Osh-Tisch was just a man and everything that they did in their life in terms of their like social position within their community was just like, normal for a man of that community. Which-

A: Which it wasn't.

E: Did he argue that?

A: No. I feel like everything else he said about Osh-Tisch was pretty well argued and well-presented and this one choice-

E: Well, I disagree.

A: Yeah, I disagree too. I think it doesn't make much sense.

I: That argument just didn't make any sense.

A: No. And that was the only argument I saw for using he/him pronouns. And otherwise he/him pronouns I generally found in the writings of-

E: Older-

A: Older people.

E: Um, I think there is this thing where people write about like, any gender diverse people where they're like so, all of these reasons for using like pronouns other than those belonging to the gender they were assigned at birth, but like, that's scary. So I'm going to do that.

A & I: Yeah.

A: Yeah, and I feel like it's like there's a whole lot of reasons to use they, and a whole lot of reasons to use she, and they've just kind of fallen back on but we know they had a penis.

E: But 'biologically speaking' -

A: Yeah, yeah. And it's not very valid. At all.

E: Agreed.

I: Yeah. How does Roscoe talk about like, non-Indigenous trans people?

E: Does he?

A: I don't think he does.

I: Does he ever, because like if that's how he approaches Osh-Tisch how would he justify not approaching trans people that way, which is obviously a bad thing to do?

E: When was that book from, or like, book, it was a book?

A: It was a book. I can check. I have it right here.

E: Yeah check, because I want to know.

A: 2000.

E: Oh. That's like super recent.

A: Yeah.

E: I thought it was going to be from the 70s or something, which was just kind of a bad time.

[laughter]

A: No, it's a recent book, it's a recent book.

E: Alright. Well I'd be curious to look into that and see what he thinks he's doing with his life.

A: Yeah, it's a book, it's called *Changing Ones* and it's about a whole lot of different two-spirit people across a whole lot of different Indigenous nations and there's just one chapter on Osh-Tisch.

E: Okay.

A: So you can read it.

I: Does he always take that approach to his pronoun choices of two-spirit people?

A: I didn't read all the other chapters.

I: Okay.

E: Reasonable.

I: Reasonable, yeah.

A: I dunno.

E: Does he have a like, introduction where he lays out his methodology, or is this... was this specifically in regard to Osh-Tisch?

A: This specifically came up in the chapter on Osh-Tisch.

E: Okay.

A: After Osh-Tisch's death it can be difficult to know what *batée* existed in the following decades, and I've mentioned already the influence of men like Petzoldt and generally the US, Western influence in suppressing those genders. So to the best of my knowledge there are no records of *batée* who reached puberty between the 1920s and the 1960s. Obviously that doesn't mean they didn't exist...

E: Mhm.

A: ...and looking beyond Crow, on that topic of, you know, us not knowing what was going on, local historian Edith McLeod, who researched the Klamath two-spirit person White Cindy in the 1950s discovered that while she could gather information from local Klamath people, non-Indigenous people who did know about White Cindy would refuse to speak about them, and Edith McLeod quotes them saying things like "I know, but it's not printable"...

E: Okay...

A: ...or "I know but I can't tell you."

E: Okay.

A: So given that non-Indigenous people's voices were - and are - privileged in mainstream history, conversations about third-gender people were pretty effectively silenced for many decades.

E: Mm. Well, that's rubbish.

I: Yeah.

A: It is rubbish, I agree.

E: Mm.

A: We should look into White Cindy some time.

E: Yeah!

I: Yeah.

E: How?

A: I... don't know.

[laughter]

E: I guess we must roadtrip.

A: I mean Edith McLeod...

I: Yes, we can drive to America.

A: Edith McLeod does mention that like, she managed to talk to Indigenous people but not non-Indigenous people, so... oh, maybe she gathered some information. I dunno.

So today among the Crow there are people who identify as *batée*, having learnt about the identity from their elders. A *batée* who was interviewed in the '80s recalls that as a child they were punished by family members for playing with traditionally feminine toys and for dressing like a girl, but then they say: "But my grandfather intervened, and told me about the old days when people respected the *badé*. After that my uncle and mother laid off me."

E: That's very good.

I: Ah! Yeah.

A: Yeah! So there was kind of a bit of a gap, a kind of... the older people...

I: ...remembered.

A: ...remembered, and then it was suppressed...

E: Yeah.

A: ...and now it's coming back.

E: But like, not for long enough that it wasn't in living memory...

A: Yeah.

I: Mm.

E: ...and that's very good.

A: Yeah. Yeah.

E: So could have... could have screwed that up much worse than it already was.

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

A: Yeah. *Batée* today among Crow people, though, is often translated simply as 'homosexual' or as 'gay'. This might also possibly be that some *batée* revert to these easily-understood terms...

E: Mm.

A: ...of 'gay' and 'homosexual' rather than try and explain their identity to outsiders who aren't Crow and don't...

E: Yep.

A: ...have this history. So a *batée* in the '80s explained to an anthropologist that they usually dressed androgynously and presented that way while on the reservation, but they would put on more traditionally feminine clothing and present as a woman when going out into white towns so they drew less attention to themselves.

I: Okay, okay.

A: So obviously these people's identities are different in some way to Osh-Tisch's identity, partly 'cos everyone's identity is different, and partly because the Crow culture has changed and adapted since European settlement.

I: Mm.

A: Um... but it's also worth noting that modern Western understandings of gender and sexuality have probably been influenced and informed by Indigenous American ones as well, and that our culture also changes and adapts, and it doesn't mean that these *batée* people aren't as validly *batée* as Osh-Tisch was.

I: Yeah.

A: On the topic of Western understandings of gender and sexuality being influenced by Indigenous American ones, Western authors that pioneered the way talk about sexuality and gender today, or at least, started that conversation - people like Karl Heinrich Ulrichs and Havelock Ellis - draw on ethnographic reports from North America to inform their own discussions about gender around the world.

I: Ah! That is quite interesting.

A: Yeah.

E: They are a pretty like, classic example.

A: [laughs]

E: You know?

I: Yeah.

E: Like, if someone's like "No! Trans people have always existed!" it's like, three, two, one, and... two-spirit people. [laughs]

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

A: Yeah, exactly, exactly.

E: Yeah.

A: As Will Roscoe, who we've talked about, says - and in this quote he uses the word 'berdache', which is an older word for two-spirit person...

E: Oh, is that how you pronounce that?

A: Yeah.

E: Okay.

A: Yeah.

[laughter]

E: Sure.

A: It's French!

I: How do you spell it?

E: Oh my God, France!

A: [laughs] B-E-R-D-A-C-H-E.

I: 'Cos like, I've heard this word spoken, and I've never seen it written down.

A: Oh, well it's 'berdache'.

I: Yeah. Like I've heard 'berdache' and I've never seen it written down!

E: Together we had a full understanding of this word, Irene!

I: We did.

[laughter]

A: So um, yeah. [laughs] Anyway, Will Roscoe says, "There is no 'pure' native berdache tradition, and there is no 'pure' Western category of homosexuality. After five centuries of contact, both refer to each other."

So 'berdache' came to America from French settlers, and it originally comes from a Persian word which is used to refer to a captive or slave...

I: Ah...

A: ...of any gender. And it came into French and was used in French to refer to the younger or passive partner in a male-male relationship. From France and that French meaning of the word it came over to America and for a long time it was the widely used word, and most often among anthropologists and ethnographers and those kinds of people, for two-spirit people.

I: Yep, but it's a problematic word and we should not continue.

A: Yeah, it's now been replaced by the word 'two-spirit' and...

I: Yep.

A: ...I don't think there are any Indigenous people - maybe there are but I don't think so - who identify as 'berdache'.

I: Okay, yep.

A: But that is the word that Roscoe uses.

I: Mhm. Roscoe... sounds like a problem.

E: [laughs] Oooh!

A: [laughs]

E: Roscoe sounds like a mixed scholarly bag.

A: Yeah.

[laughter]

A: Roscoe is a mixed scholarly bag.



I: Yeah.

A: That's an accurate summary of Roscoe. But yeah, I just wanted to end with that quote and that comment about modern-day *batée* to highlight that it's important to remember that Osh-Tisch's story and identity isn't the story of a lost culture or identity that no longer exists, but it is part of the history of a living culture and living queer history.

With that, we've been Queer as Fact. Thank you very much for listening. I'm Alice.

I: I'm Irene.

E: I'm Eli.

A: If you enjoyed this episode, you can find us on social media, on Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr as Queer as Fact, and you can also email us directly at [queerasfact@gmail.com](mailto:queerasfact@gmail.com). You can find the rest of our podcasts on Podbean and iTunes. If you find us on iTunes, we'd love it if you would rate us and leave us a review, and Eli is about to read out some of those reviews that we... we've recently received now.

E: Okay, so we have one review to read...

A: Mhm.

E: ...and then we are out of reviews.

I: Cool.

E: So yeah, please send us more. We'll read them out on this podcast, like, soon.

A: Yeah.

E: So the subject for this review is "@jivescrok", which I think is someone who follows us on Twitter, so I'm assuming they're making their identity known. Um, and they wrote: "Great humor, nice banter, and cataloging queer history in a 21st century way. Thanks for being an electronic Herodotus!"

[laughter]

A: I love it.

E: Which I liked and would put on a T-shirt if I was so inclined.

A: Very good, very good.

E: So thank you very much for taking the time to review us. I also thought I would read out a comment that someone left on our Podbean. Ah.... so if you listen to us on Podbean or, you know, if you don't and you have the means to go to the Podbean website, you can comment on individual episodes, which might suit your purposes better if you just wanted to give us feedback on an individual episode without writing to us directly or something like that. We encourage you to interact with us in as many ways as you like, because we are very thirsty for that kind of interaction.

[laughter]

E: Um... so Sportzqueen with a 'Z' commented on the second part of our Pauli Murray episode and said: "This episode was so, so, so good and juicy."

A: [laughs]

I: Aww.

E: "I absolutely love listening to these queer histories, but the long discussion about approaching historical trans figures was everything I wanted and more. More of this kind of content please." So thank you, that was very validating.

A: That's very good, 'cos we weren't sure if two episodes about Pauli Murray was too many.

E: Yeah, also putting like a, just a lengthy kind of theoretical discussion with no storytelling at the end of like two hours of content...

I: [laughs]

E: ...was kind like, people are just gonna turn this off.

A: [laughs]

I: No, they wanna read your thesis. They wanna read your PhD thesis.

E: Are you talking about my PhD thesis...

I: Yeah.

E: ...that doesn't exist yet?

I: Yeah.

E: I see. If you wanna read my PhD thesis, send us a one-time donation at...

[laughter]

A: Ahhhh.... good.

E: We have now read out all reviews from iTunes and things, uh, on here, so review us.

A: Do you want to...

I: And we'll read it out.

A: We'll be back on the 8th of June, with a mini episode about the Dutch World War 2 resistance fighter Willem Arondeus, and we'll be back with our next long episode on the 15th of June, when Irene will be talking to us about the Russian poet Sofya Parnok. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.

[music plays]