

Who Are You Wearing – Travis Alabanza

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN: Hello. Welcome to the Who Are You Wearing podcast with me, Kiri Pritchard-McLean. I'm a stand-up comedian that loves clothes and style and fashion and what people wear. I find it fascinating. So on this podcast I have a little chat to people that I think are absolutely dapper. That's the best phrase for it.

So this week I am chatting to artist, activist, and absolute babe Travis Alabanza. Now I wish I could add 'comedian' to that list because I think Travis is so funny and we need more good people on our team. As you can tell, we are both so excited to chat about clothes and style together, and heads up, we do talk about homophobia and transphobia as well.

This interview was recorded in August of 2021. Travis was in their house and I was, as per, in my cupboard. Now you might notice that this wasn't recorded that long ago, but it's because I just knew you guys would want to hear this chat as soon as possible. So get ready for a giddy, fascinating conversation as I ask Travis Alabanza, 'who are you wearing?'

TRAVIS ALABANZA: It's all a blur because, you know, you take a lot of Calpol. But like, um, so like seven to ten you're like, 'who knows?' But, um –

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: Um, but somewhere between then I became really obsessed with clothes. I mean my mum's very stylish. Um, and I

kind of can only realise that now. But like she has impeccable style. Very different style, but like it's so good. Um, and I think she was always very considered about what we were wearing. And like wanted us to look good despite having no money.

And so yeah, from a young age she gave us the kind of freedom to pick out our own outfits, wear what we want, and I could see – because I had an older brother who was like three years older than me, I could see the stark difference in what we were picking. And so from a young age I think I learnt that style's personal, because here were these two like inverted commas 'boys' picking like the complete opposite clothes to wear, you know?

KIRI: Yeah, that's so interesting. Would you look at your brother and be like, 'that's how not to do it?'

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: Well no, I think I obviously didn't have the words for it back then, but I was just like – in my head I was just like, 'oh, that's how like men dress. That's how like, you know, boys are meant to dress.' And I hadn't obviously got the language for what I was, but I was just like, 'oh, no, that's cool. That's like a stylish boy. But I'm going to pick like an art teacher on acid. So I'm going to be over there.'

KIRI: 'I'll be the one huffing Cowpol there.'

TRAVIS: Yeah yeah yeah. 'You have fun, though.'

KIRI: That is amazing. So you had a strong sense of style as a kid, then.

TRAVIS: Style. Definitely questionable word around some of the choices. But like yeah, I was picking wild stuff. And from a young age, like even like school uniform was where I think I first found my personal style, which seems interesting because like obviously it's a uniform. But like we were in a state comprehensive. You could obviously like – uniform wasn't always the biggest issue that they had.

So like I would – I would get my mum to like sew my trousers tight at the top and then flare them out at the bottom. I would like wear like seven million chokers and like loads of chokers up here. I remember I went through like a big chunky cardigan phase where like each day of the week I had like a different patterned cardigan. And then like match the pattern with my socks. Like – and people were always – I mean they were bad – but this was also the era of like the indie band. You know? So it was very like fake, you know, rimmed glasses era. Bowties. And I think that like I was just finding it through that, you know?

KIRI: It sounds like you were off on your own, dressing yourself from a pretty young age. Because lots of people, their parents dress them for a long time or they'll have cousins or siblings that are an influence. But were you just pretty much straight out the gate putting yourself together?

TRAVIS: Yeah, f***** straight out the gate, really.

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: That's what you're trying to say.

KIRI: The name of the autobiography.

TRAVIS: Yeah. Kiri, just say it. Just say it. Um, yeah. Kind of. Like it sounds wank for me to say like, 'yeah, I had it. Done it from the beginning.' But I did. I – I try and remember a time when I didn't and it's actually just not – as soon as secondary school started, I was just like doing my own thing. And like by 13, 14 I had like seven piercings on my ear, two nose piercings. Like it was always this push to see like what I could do. I bleached my afro like blonde. Like platinum blonde. And ruined it. And then shaved the sides like and made this big Mohawk. It was – there was a lot happening. Like every two weeks I'd be like, 'what can I modify?' Um, and it wasn't to piss anyone off. It was just for me, really, you know? It did piss people off.

KIRI: So it wasn't a – an act of rebelling? Because often when you – when kids are being really sort of really experimenting with their style, um, it's a reflection of a – like a personal rebellion. So do you think it was a reflection of anything, or was this just you having fun?

TRAVIS: I don't know. Because I've probably blocked out this – I don't know, because I haven't gone into it. But like I don't think so. There was nothing – my mum wasn't like a – you know, normally it's like a source of rebelling at your parents, but my mum was like really okay with it. I mean the piercings not so much, but like I didn't do it to piss her off. And like I think because she knew I didn't do it to piss her off she wasn't pissed off.

I actually think I did it really because I was like screaming for a way to like signify to like external people that like I'm not what you're saying I am. You know, that typical like 14, 15 when you're like, 'I'm not – I'm not this, I'm that.' And just like trying really hard. Um, but I think it was also because it – it made me feel good. Like I think that like I just did it because it was joyful, you

know? It was fun. I was like, 'wow, I'm – everyone's missing a trick by not modifying yourself. Like this is so fun that one day I can be like dressed in this' – I remember like I'd pick like different music people to like copy. And I'd be like, 'this day I'm going to be like Lady Gaga from Fame. And the next day I can be like, um, the Kaiser Chiefs, you know?' Or like those would be my mood boards. And like it was so cool to be able to flip like that, you know?

KIRI: So, so cool. Because you're like, um, you know how like Madonna constantly reinvents? I just imagine you being like that. But you're like 15 with this gorgeous, platinum afro.

TRAVIS: The platinum afro was not gorgeous. I thought it was gorgeous at the time, and then looking back at photos I'm like, 'oh my god. People let me like walk out the house like that?'

KIRI: Um, but surely like there's an element of you that looks at those pictures – which we are going to ask for, by the way. Um –

TRAVIS: Oh, shit. Okay, got it. Got it.

KIRI: And – and looks at them and thinks, 'I'd much rather see like a kid sort of revelling in their joy and finding themselves than, "oh, I'm one of these kids that looks like all the others in their uniform."'”

TRAVIS: Definitely. I look back and I'm like so glad I got a – I just see it as a head start. Like really, truly, I just see it as like – because I – I think about like work and now, like – and I'm like, 'how – how am I like here now?' And I'm like, 'oh, because I'm – I didn't like limit myself when I was a kid.' Like I was able to like not

– I did what every teenager does, which is like figure themselves – spend that time figuring themselves out.

But I think when you're trans and gender nonconforming, unfortunately like it's not always safe to, and so then you have to spend your 20s like – I mean we're always all figuring ourselves out. But do you know what I mean? Like then a lot of that experimentation happens in our 20s. And I see that with some of my friends. And I'm like, 'oh, I think I got to do like a lot of that young.' Obviously I'm still doing it now. Wait, look. I had to get you up a picture. There's the blonde afro.

KIRI: I love it. Gorgeous. I think that's gorgeous.

TRAVIS: Oh! And then like – [laughs] I don't know. Well I'll send them through. I think it's – it damaged the hair. Where's it a bit more like – it was so – yeah, that's it a bit more. This was when I was going for like indie kind of boy band.

KIRI: I would've fancied you so much. I fancy you now even though it's illegal.

TRAVIS: No, I was – I'm like, 'that's a – very much a 16 year old.'

KIRI: Oh, gosh.

TRAVIS: But – but I think that's the thing as well. Like my – I could get into clubs then. I think that changed it. You know, I looked – in those photos I don't look 16. And so being around club culture at a young age was like, 'oh, everyone's experimenting there.' So I just think I was acting too old for myself.

KIRI: Were you ever then – growing up, were you ever put in an item of clothing that you hated? Because I would've thought going into this, 'oh, I'll talk to Travis and they will have hated their school uniform.' But you were – I mean up-selling it, reinventing it so much. It's unrecognisable.

TRAVIS: Yes. Yeah, absolutely. And like I think it's because I hated it so much. And it's because I like needed to. And I was like, 'I need to find a way to make this feel not gendered. And so I'm going to show them like that I'm just obviously not playing along.' Um, but I remember weddings being like a hard time. Because – and I think I would still – I haven't gone to a wedding in so long. I need some of my friends – stop. [claps] Stop being slags. Sort it out.

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: Um, but I think I – I haven't been to a wedding since my – like I was a teenager. And I found them really hard, especially like late teens. Because I wasn't confident enough to wear a dress yet. But I didn't know how else to do formal. And I used to see like style issues – I think what I'm figuring out in the middle of this thought is like I do think how much emphasis I put on style was a distraction to dysphoria. And I think that is what I'm learning in my 20s, is like, 'hm, all of this is a distraction of like how you actually feel about your body.'

And so when I couldn't get a fashion assignment right, I would be so upset. Like unfathomably upset. And especially for a 17 year old, like, 'why are you this upset?' And I think weddings were when – and there's some photos of me at a few like formal settings and I'm just in like a white shirt and trousers. And I'm like,

'I would never.' Like I just would never. And I look like weird, you know? Like not myself.

KIRI: That's so interesting. What – what do you think made you feel at weddings less able to express yourself than – than in school? Where to me school is such a brutal, tough environment. Um, but – but that you were just striking out and being yourself? And then weddings, you know, that you felt so disempowered that you couldn't be yourself?

TRAVIS: Well I think – I think if I went back to school now I would totally not be as bold. I think I was oblivious in my school years. Like beautifully oblivious. Um, and also I think – because do you know what? It's class actually. All the weddings I've been to are really posh.

KIRI: Right.

TRAVIS: And there's like a – it's harder to break posh formalities, I feel. Whereas my school, like everyone was doing something fucking weird. Like, you know? So like they – the least of their issues was me having like seven shag bands on my arm. So like I think it was the two weddings I've ever been to in my life, were like my dad's side of the family so I don't really know them as well. And posh. And I think I let that get to me about the like expectations of other people.

And I was like, 'I'm already dealing with meeting new people. Meeting people that I don't really know.' Like my dad's side of the family, like most of them are white. So like I hadn't – hadn't been around that many white people ever. So I was like, 'I don't know how this is going to go. I need – maybe I need to be in a sensible

shoe to run, you know? Like I'm not about to film Get Out the prequel, you know?'

So – so, you know, I didn't know. So I think – I think that's why maybe. And then in school it was just like chaos, you know? When I describe my secondary school, it's just – it was just a chaotic time. So you could do more chaotic things, I think. Because you were watching all these people also do that in their own way, you know? Not all of them were crossdressers. But, you know, some of them were doing their own ish.

KIRI: Yeah. Yeah, I – I totally see now why in a sort of like – yeah, like a – a busy state school with lots going on, everyone's got stuff going on, that you felt safer there than at a very white, like a middle-class, straight in every sense of the word –

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: Small and big 'c' conservative.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: Why that is a much more dangerous place for you to be yourself.

TRAVIS: Yeah, yeah. And it's that risk assessment thing again. Maybe at the weddings I was like, 'ooh, I don't want this to take up the whole convo.' You know? 'I don't want this to be the whole two days. I can't be bothered.' But looking back, it is a regret. Because I thought I'd be at many more weddings. And so I had a chance to – but I've been at none. So I've really not got the chance to plan an outfit. So I would've really gone back and nailed it.

KIRI: Babe, we were having such a nice chat for you. Me and my partner are planning on getting married in the next couple of years. You are absolutely on the list. Just for the outfit alone.

TRAVIS: [laughs] Not me getting – not me getting an invite just for pity. I love it. I feel it. I feel it. I feel it. If you need me to like do a lip-synch or something at the wedding, I can –

KIRI: Absolutely.

TRAVIS: I can offer that.

KIRI: We'll – we'll give you our vows and you can lip-synch to those.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Um, I wanted to ask, did you, um, did you have an item of clothing or an outfit that when you either a kid or a teenager, that you loved and never wanted to take off?

TRAVIS: Yeah. Oh my god. Oh, and I now could wear it now. This is the thing. You get rid of stuff and you're like, 'I'm never going to wear it again.' And you're like, 'no, I want to.' I had this like – I was addicted to vintage like charity shopping and – when I was 15 and stuff. And I had this fucking gorgeous like red metallic bomber jacket that was like huge and puffy. And I wore it everywhere. And I loved it so much. And it was – oh, it was just gorgeous.

And I would always get comments on it. And I would wear it with like – because it was quite masculine like top. I would wear it with something like really tight and like feminine underneath, and I felt

so cool. Like no one could tell me shit. And I'd like pair it with like two big gold earrings. And then these little Nike Air Force – oh my god, I was such a wanker. I loved it.

KIRI: It sounds flawless. It sounds like –

TRAVIS: It was hot. It was hot. I – you know, I dressed a lot hotter back then. Like sexy. It was sexy. It was a sexy fucking coat. Damn. Damn.

KIRI: That's, um, well we'll get onto the sexy thing later, because that's really interesting, what you just said. So when you were growing up, um, I think you're a bit younger than me, what were the big trends as a teenager? Were you – were you – I know you're saying you're sort of emulating different like – you know, like music icons.

TRAVIS: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: But were there any trends that you were like, 'yes please?' Or were you cherry picking from all popular culture?

TRAVIS: It's hard because like I never paid too much attention to trends. Um, I think – well when I was – when I was a young teenager, skinny jeans weren't being worn by men – men yet. So if you were wearing them, you were like seen as fashionable or a f***** or both, obviously. Um, so like – no, I avoid all the trends. My trends growing up for like I guess everyone else was like chinos. That was when like all the like 14 year olds started wearing chinos.

KIRI: Like the only –

TRAVIS: And I was like – yeah, I was like, ‘what the fuck are we doing?’ Like, ‘what’s going on? Like why are you all wearing different colour like £15 chinos from Topman? Like what is happening?’ And so no, I ran. And yeah, it was chinos. That was it. Chinos. Just all these 14 year olds were wearing chinos and plimsolls. Do you remember it was like Daps – like and I was like, ‘wait, we wear these in PE. What the fuck is happening?’

But I was – I was quite inspired – I guess my trends were like – I was really into like sportswear in like – I guess a wanky, ironic way that I guess now has happened again recently. So, you know, I’d wear like a lot of like Adidas dresses and like, you know, like a Nike matching outfit with heels. And like that was kind of my vibe. And then I guess like – yeah, those were – that was the kind of trend that I was – I guess that was a trend at the time and I must’ve been just picking it up from somewhere else. But, um, and bowties. I wore a lot of like bowties and suspenders. And like big circular glasses for a long time. I don’t know if that was a trend.

KIRI: But every look you describe is completely different. It’s completely like –

TRAVIS: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: And so were you just going, ‘who am I today?’

TRAVIS: I just had a lot of inspirations. And I think I just didn’t really get – there was like one time, I remember – god, this – this is interesting, because obviously I’m never asked about my clothes, even though I think about them all the time. And so it’s so nice to dive in, because I’m very intentional about it.

But there was a time when I was 17 – the only time I planned what I was wearing and bought a consistent style. I remember I was 17 and I'd just – I'd been making like a bit of money to me, because I'd been working in retail and like working like ridiculous amounts. And I was working in Office, the shoe store. So I had like discount in the Cabot Circus, which is the mall. And I remember being like, 'I'm at a new sixth form, I'm going to try doing like minimal chic uniform.' And so I bought like four black pairs of tapered trousers and seven different tops. And every day for like two months I just wore like black, minimal outfits. Why did I do this? I was 17.

But it's the only time I ever like did do the same thing every day. And it felt really good, but it did feel like a drag experiment almost. But it was so fun. I felt really like – and it – and it got me like – I – I don't know, I experienced like clubbing differently. I definitely got more attention from like men. It was like very interesting. Um, and then I was like, 'this is really long and boring. Um, I can't wear the same thing every day.' But was cool.

KIRI: It's really cool.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: Because when you were talking about you sort of wearing the same thing every day, most people have that experience as a 17 year old and it's probably a pair of skinny jeans, maybe some Vans or Converse, a t-shirt and a hoodie. But you're like, 'so I went for a tapered trouser, I got – I got –' it's so chic. It's – it's like Warhol to me. That kind of chic, utilitarian. It's actually how I think fashion designers dress. Where they're kind of utilitarian and very chic.

TRAVIS: Yes, I'm going to go – I am going to do it again soon. I was thinking about this. Because basically my wardrobe at the moment – I said to Sophie, I was like, 'Sophie, I'm doing a wearing podcast but I've never been like in a weirder place with my clothes and fashion, after a pandemic.' And so I'm actually going back – when I get a bit of money, I don't know, by Christmas, I'm going to do like another get rid and like utility wear. Also for the environment. Like not to buy anything new and just to know that it's like there. But I was thinking about – when I was 17 and doing it, and I was like, 'it did feel kind of like – I don't know, obsessed.' I'm obsessed. I was – I was obsessed with clothes, you know? Obsessed.

KIRI: I know. And – well that's why I wanted you on. Because I can see from every post on Instagram – and not that it's like – not that I think you're curated or anything, but even if you're popping up to just chat about something, that I'm like, 'I want to talk about that item of clothing, I want to talk about that item. I want to talk about the thing that I can see in a pile behind you. I want to talk about this.' So I was like, 'I have to speak to Travis.'

TRAVIS: Wait, I found a photo from my – I'll send these all to you, but this was my trip to London when I was 17. But this was the kind of utilitarian like –

KIRI: Oh my gosh, love it.

TRAVIS: All black, yeah.

KIRI: So it is –

TRAVIS: And I just keep –

KIRI: Like almost like uniformy but with a really chic edge, right?

TRAVIS: Yes. Yes. And so I was 17 and I just did that. And then the next day it would all – that again but all in grey. Or like – yeah. Yeah.

KIRI: Fascinating. Fascinating. Do you know I – I spoke to – do you know, um, Glamrou who's in Dublin?

TRAVIS: Yes! Love Glamrou. Love Glamrou.

KIRI: Yeah, so, um, like Glamrou's talking about a time when they were in university and they went through a stage of, you know, American Apparel. Apparel. Whatever it is. Where they would have like block colour I think trousers and t-shirts are the same. They went through a stage of block colouring – the same thing but different colours everyday.

TRAVIS: Oh.

KIRI: And you're the only person that I've known that's done sort of a similar thing. So that's interesting.

TRAVIS: Yeah. I think – I think – and, you know, I can't speak for Amrou, but knowing Amrou – you know, Amrou's a good friend of mine. And like I can't speak for them but I do think there's something about control. And I think that there is something that clothes give – dysphoria is uncontrollable, um, so I'm just speaking for me, not Amrou. But when you could have dysphoria or when you feel dysphoric or when the world gives you a dysphoric experience from constantly labelling you as something that you don't feel, and because I'm personally or wasn't at the time

wanting to medically change anything, I was like, 'where can I have control?' And fashion does give control.

I'm like, 'I get to have – decide about what you look like. And what you think of me.' And also it made me remember how kind of – of a farce gender was. How – how it was never really about body parts. Because I could literally change just my clothes and the whole experience of my life when I walk outside would change. The how I'm reacted to, how I'm responded to, how I'm gendered, how service people speak to me, how posh people speak to me. Just on clothes. And they want to make it feel like it's because I'm a man, but it's actually like, 'no, this is just about what I'm wearing.' And so I think there was something quite powerful in taking back that control, you know, for me personally.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: The style that you have now, which is – to me is collective of – of statement pieces. It's really, uh, it's that kind of fashion that exists above trends. I see – I always see lots of prints as well. Um, and colour. When did that start manifesting? Because we know you've gone through the stage of emulating different musical icons and then you've had your chic 17 year old stage, which I absolutely love. It's made my heart sing. And then your sort of sports, sexy stage. And interestingly, when you talk about yourself younger, you're saying it's much sexier. Um, and it's not that I don't get sexy from you, it's just that I get chic fashion from you now. So when did this start? And when did the transition happen?

TRAVIS: We can be honest, we're not getting sexy from my fashion. [laughs] We can just keep it real. And it – and that's something I'm trying to change like in this next thing. Because I've realised that I think, um, yeah, I think it happened when I – not

when I moved to London. When I first moved to London I still had that kind of sexy streetwear kind of look. And then I think that I started being an artist. And when I was first as an artist I had this weird idea that like people would be thinking about my image as much as I was. And I soon learnt that like, 'babe, you write plays. No one cares.'

But like because my only examples of artists growing up were pop stars, I was like, 'pop stars have a look. Pop stars like have an aesthetic. Pop stars like care about every time they make things.' And it wasn't that I wanted to be a pop star. I just was like, 'that feels like an artistic – an extension of your art.' And so when I was making shows in the clubs, I was like, 'I'm always going to sit in this like –' I remember I was really strict at the beginning.

I was like, 'everything I'm doing is going to be like pastel. It's all going to be like pop and pastel and like pop art and big and larger than life and statement and like clashing. And nothing's going to feel chic in a traditional sense. It's going to feel like chic in this kind of mismatched sense.' And I want to make outfits that people either really hate and say that I'm the worst dressed person ever, or people are obsessed with and say I'm the best dressed.

And, you know, you calm down because you learn that like one, you're at a club, no one gives a shit. Or people give a shit and people don't. And two you realise like yeah, like there's going to be things more important than – than that. Um, but yeah, I think I started this kind of like imagery and I was also, you know, at the time I, you know, I don't – I didn't go to art school and I didn't – like I don't have a university degree. I did go to university for like a brief moment.

But like the only way I was building an audience was the internet. And I knew that eventually I wouldn't want to use the internet. I knew that like I wanted to be like just a writer or just performing. But I was like, 'the only way these big institutions are going to take notice of me is if I have a following, and is if I have proved that I have an audience outside of them.' And part of that is about image.

And so I was quite, you know, I'm not – I used to be embarrassed about saying this because of course like no one likes to hear someone being intentional about something. Everyone thinks that means you're not authentic. It's like, 'no, it's an extension of my authenticity.' But I was very intentional about like – part of this excitement is going to be around the looks as well. Um, and it was fun. Like it was fun to do. It was another project, you know?

KIRI: I think it's so interesting what you say about being intentional. That this really unhealthy thing, which I think is rooted in classism – the idea that you can't be an artist and be business-minded.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: That there's some sort of like – that your art is devalued by it. And it's like, 'no no, that only comes from people whose parents are able to subsidise them through their absolutely adequate output.'

TRAVIS: Yeah. Yeah. I'm that bish. I gave myself a year. I had to make enough money to pay my rent in a year of doing this. Otherwise my mum was going to be like, 'go back to fucking school,' you know? So like yes, you've got to be business-minded and – and, you know, then it's about learning when to get that

balance and when to like not treat it as a hustle. But we have to. Because who the hell else is going to fund our fucking shit? We speak about – we talk shit on a mic onstage. We've got to like – there's got to be another income stream.

And, you know, beyond that also, I would go outside in London, apparently the cultural capital of the world, apparently the place where everyone can be everybody and everything. And I – me and my friends would know that we'd go out and feel so alone because we'd be harassed all the time. And so I remember I started – my first project online was I'd document what I was wearing and document when happened to me when I was wearing that outfit. And so it kind of became this thing of like, 'look at this outfit that's praised online and look how it's also demoralised in the streets.' And how are these things like balancing together.

Um, you know, I've got a grip and stopped being as – as expressive online in that way now. Um, but – but yeah, that at the beginning. When I had nothing. When I had no structure around me, you know? In those early years of becoming an artist and like doing it all by myself, there was no structure around me. And so again I think I'm finding this out real time with you, but I do think clothes and control. Like it was a way of creating structure, you know?

KIRI: That's amazing. When you're – when you're putting together looks, outfits, do you think of hair and makeup as part of the outfit? Or is that a separate thing that exists?

TRAVIS: When I've got a team with me, yes.

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: I – I'm going to keep it real. I'm going to keep it real. When I'm on my own, it's like, 'baby, the hair and makeup is going to do what it can do.' Um, it's going to do what I have the capacity to do. Um, and that's what I've definitely learnt over the pandemic. I was like, 'wow, I'm going to be sending like, uh, bouquets of flowers to my hair and makeup people.' Um, but yeah. Absolutely. When I'm planning like a look for like anything else, hair and makeup is part of the image. Because I think of like, um, I'm always modelling after like eras or icons or a combination of both. Or characters from TV. And so it's about then like taking their hair and like changing a bit of it, changing the colour, maybe, enlarging it, like making it smaller. So yeah, it's always as a package, yeah.

KIRI: It's, um, I – I just think it must be so, uh, how do I want to say what I'm going to say? I just – I look at you and how brilliantly expressive and fun and stylish you are, and just hearing you talk then about sort of hair and makeup and things, and taking everything into account that like – well it's just reminding me of my own privilege and that to me fashion is a – like a frivolous thing. Even though, you know, like I'm plus size.

TRAVIS: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: But like that's as – as close to anything that I can get. But like your hair is politicised, your skin colour, your face, your body, your clothes. Everything is politicised on – not even on your behalf, do you know what I mean? Like it's – it's for you. And I just think it's – it's kind of incredible that you've dealt with all that pressure and just created. And controlled and created, controlled and created.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: Is, um, is amazing in that even if you weren't making such brilliant work as well, just by extension of you existing, it's a celebration of survival, I think.

TRAVIS: Oh, fuck. Thank you. Well, yes and no, you know? Like yeah. And also we all – we're all doing it in like our own – whenever we put on clothes it's a choice for all of us. And yes, some choices have bigger consequences than others. But it's also not like – it also like – all of that is true, but also it brings me joy, you know? Like I'm an artistic person. And we all show our art in different ways. I can't paint for shit. I can't draw. I can't do all of that. But like this is like a form of my creativity that just brings me happiness. And I think that is the thing in lockdown I was realising. And that's why I kind of was – I've lost my mojo a bit, you know?

It was interesting getting dressed for this today, because I was like, 'oh, like this is what it feels like to put intention into your outfit.' I haven't done that for like a whole year, you know? And it's interesting. It's – do I think it's a coincidence that I'm also not using social media as much? I'm also not posting as much as I used to. I'm not – I'm glad for those things, but I also am like, 'oh, it's probably because you're not dressing up,' you know? And so it's on my to-do list before the end of the year, is to kind of re-find what my new vibe is going to be for clothes. Because it's joyful. Beyond all the politics of it all, beyond what people may put on or whatever, it's just fucking fun, you know?

KIRI: Oh, so good. Um, the – that I've tried – tried to sort of like make it really profound and you're like, 'yeah, but also just fun. Also like, it is fun, right?'

TRAVIS: I'm like, 'this a fun outfit, like – you know?

KIRI: It's a really fun outfit, yeah. Um, are there any trends that you've like repeatedly tried to pull off but it's – it's not happening. You need to let it go.

TRAVIS: God, I'd be damned to admit this. But no, it's true. I can't do, um, like – you know like Y2K fashion? I can't do that. And people try. Like I'll go to shoots and the stylist will be like, 'we haven't seen you in this We – ' Because every stylist on a shoot with me, like – there was a time, you know, where they'll be like, 'oh, we want to try something new, Travis. We never see you do this.' And then they'll put me in like Y2K like cool internet kid clothes and they'll be like, 'oh, okay, we're just going to –' and I'm like, 'yes, there's a reason why I'm not doing it. I can't do it. I can't do it.'

And they're like, 'here's the knitted cardigan with the thing again,' you know, begrudgingly hands it over. So yeah, I can't do like the hot – the East London club hot look that they're all doing where it's like low-rise trousers, loads of check. No. I – I go to the club in like a see-through blouse and like, yeah, I can't do it. I can't do it. It's just – yeah. No. No.

KIRI: I – I just love the idea of a stylist being like, 'we're going to be really bold and try this. And then being like, 'I think we can just put you in what you were wearing before.'

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: Yeah. There's been so many times on shoots where like they're like, 'we've got a stylist.' I'm like, 'great.' I'll turn up and then they'll put me in what they thought like, you know, they're

like, 'oh, a 26 years old queer, like trans.' They'll put it in and they'll go – they'll do that pause and they'll go, 'can we borrow one of your –' and I'm like, 'yes.'

KIRI: At least they know and they're not just trying to –

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: Because, you know, that thing that sometimes people can't – I think a – a sign of someone who's good at their job is when they can admit there's been like a bum steer.

TRAVIS: Yeah. Yeah.

KIRI: Um, so at least they're not like forcing you to have the photo shoot because they're like, 'no no, this is – this is what we wanted, actually. This is what we wanted from this.'

TRAVIS: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Sometimes though, like sometimes they will push through and I'll be like, 'shall I just show you a photo of me in print that we can all agree is bad?' And I'll show it to them. I'll be like, 'this is what happened when we followed through with the original rail.'

KIRI: So it sounds like you kind of get rid and clear the decks with your clothes or with your looks from time to time. Do you ever hold onto anything? Like what's your oldest item of clothing, especially if you like vintage as well?

TRAVIS: This – I changed my – my size has shifted a lot in like the last kind of five years, which has been difficult because I – I didn't know whether to keep the clothes or not. And I actually got rid of

them all because I was like, 'I don't think I'm ever going back to this size. So there is no point keeping these things.'

And I love giving my clothes to friends and people. And like I did a sale online once for like people that follow me. Like it was just cute to do. Um, but I'm trying to think what I've kept. It's jackets. It's always jackets for me. I've got like – again, I've got this like really nice vintage leather bomber jacket that I've kept for about ten, 12 years. Um, and I don't think I'll ever get rid of that until – or more of the sleeves are just fucking up. I won't get rid. I keep jackets. But yeah, everything else I do kind of give away, pass on. Um, every three or four years, really. And the next one's coming up, you know? I can feel it.

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: Because I think I'm going to get rid of the – as much of the colour. I think I'm about to do another like weird – not colour, but I just want to like – what I've learnt is like quality. I think it's like me having to learn about like the environment more and like learn about waste and like speaking to my friends that are – buy a bit more consciously, they're like, 'I buy less things but they last. And I place them together with things.' And I think before – you know, this shit costs money. But before I couldn't afford that, and now, you know, I'm like, 'no, I could save and really buy an intentional wardrobe that doesn't need as much.' Um, I think that's where I'm going. I think that's where I'm going.

KIRI: That's interesting. So when I would've looked at your social media I'd be like, 'oh, they would love shopping and maybe be like me where I – I get a lot of reward from acquisition. I – I have to understand that that's part of who I am. Um, but what – is your relationship with shopping changing, then?

TRAVIS: Yeah, in the pandemic I haven't bought anything, really. And not being outside completely shifted. I mean we've all changed in this time. And like the ways I've shifted I just never thought I would. Like before I was addicted to shopping. Especially like – I moved away from London in the pandemic as well, but being in London, every – every week I would go shopping before a meeting or before a thing. I'd buy something new.

Um, and just – yeah, this pandemic – moving to Bristol where like – obviously Bristol's got style, it's where I grew up. But like it is a different pressure. There's not really the same pressure to like look flawless everyday. Um, I just let – I let myself go and then I was like, 'actually I miss looking good, but I don't miss shopping. And so how can I like change that?' Like I do miss feeling and looking as good. I haven't felt that much in the pandemic about my physical self. Um, but I don't miss the constant need to buy things.

So how do I do this? And when I have bought things recently for like events, because it's opened up again, I've felt really like not good. I've – and not because I think buying's wrong or whatever. Like more because I'm like, 'hm, this feels like an impulse for like something that I know I'm not going to keep,' you know? So I actually think the 17 year old me that did the uniform was onto something.

KIRI: They had it all figured out.

TRAVIS: Literally. I should just pause time there. Fuck it. It would've saved me some time. Jeez.

KIRI: But I –

TRAVIS: I was having more – more sex, more drugs, and more alcohol back then too. Like come on.

KIRI: I think there's loads of us who would go, 'yeah, I think I peaked at 17 as well.'

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: Yeah. Literally. Literally.

KIRI: Can I ask about, um, with shopping then, do you – if and when you do it, are you online or do you much prefer being in a shop? What is – what is the – if – if you're going to get joy from it – or is there just no joy and it's actually quite stressful?

TRAVIS: Oh, no, there's joy. There's joy. I think. I mean then again it's like so hard to tell because I just can't remember. Like but before – before corona, yeah, in – in store. I love, um, going into vintage stores and giving myself, you know, three hours in one shopping area and really just trying it all on, chatting to the people at the place, picking the shopping outfit, you know? You want to pick an outfit that you're then going to buy for. Like I always pick an outfit when I'm shopping that is like the heightened version of the things I'm looking for. So that then like the shop person – they give you more attention if you're in a look as well. So, you know, you're in like a – they think you're going to buy shit because you look like someone that cares about buying shit.

So I love the whole – I love the whole drama of it, you know? I'm like, 'I've picked a dramatic outfit and I'm going to buy more dramatic outfits, you know?' Um, so yeah. Definitely in store. I – I

used to love, you know, going around Brick Lane and just like walking around there for ages and popping into like the different places. Um, going well over my target, you know? Always. I've like, 'this is how much you can spend,' and then being like, 'fuck.' But yeah. Shopping in person over online all the time.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: It's difficult, isn't it? Because it's this weird thing – I'm so aware of doing this podcast and I'm speaking to people who are successful that I have noticed or worked with, and then even if some of us aren't from a background with lots of money, we're in a position now where we have more. So it's this – this – everything is like dripping with this whole, you know, because basically everyone turns around and goes, 'I'm trying to be sustainable, I'm trying to invest more.' And I am so aware of like me as a kid listening to this, who loved clothes, who could only really go to charity shops. And I loved that. I – I loved the creativeness of it.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: But I'm just always so aware. And I know you come from a background as well, like that's, you know, like working class background. So it's – do you ever find a schism with that in – in trying to think, you know, like – yeah?

TRAVIS: Yeah. Yeah, I can hear like every part of my younger self being like, 'who the fuck is this prick? Shut up.' Um, but – but, you know, I mean, anything I say from this point on is going to be wankery because I think whenever we talk about these things it sounds wankery. But like, [posh voice] 'what my therapist helps me with' – but, um, like – 'that therapist that I also pay for' – but

like, um, is that, you know, in our transitions in life, whether they're class transitions, gender transitions, whatever, is like to give ourselves grace for like the – the person we're becoming and the person we were.

And so I'm just like – I'm changing in lots of ways. If I had the same spending habits that I did when I was 17, then nothing's shifting, and my materialities are change. And it's about not making blanket rules for anyone else. But just for myself. You know, this is helpful for me to think more sustainable, because this is the way I can think about the planet because I'm in a position where I can do that. Um, but this isn't my rule for someone else because I don't know their position, you know?

And so we all know our capabilities of what we can do. And I'm just like, 'hold on a minute, my excuses that I used to use about the climate' – because they were excuses – because I was afraid, was, 'well, that's a rich way of thinking about it. I've not got the money to do that. I can – you can fuck off. I'm not – I'm going to McDonalds because that's the only place I can afford. I'm going to shop here because it's the only place I can afford.'

And those are all true and valid. And then there was a point when I was using them still and I paused. I was like, 'wait babe, like that's not true anymore. Like you actually could pause to think about where you want to invest and where you want to put in time, you know?' So I think it's just personal, isn't it?

KIRI: Yeah. Very wise. So wise.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Um, I wanted to ask if there was an era that you wish you existed in just for the fashion.

TRAVIS: Yes. Oh, yes. 50s.

KIRI: Really?

TRAVIS: So – oh my god, late 50s, early 60s. I would go down a tree. Yeah, yeah. Hands down. Every single time.

KIRI: Very – much more structured than I expected from you, in a way.

TRAVIS: Yeah. I think I just love the shapes. I love – and, you know, I would invert it maybe. But I'm sure I'd still be a rebellious person there too. But I just loved how the shapes – the shift dresses, I loved like the – everywhere was a dress-up event. You were always dressed up. It was always like a time to like pull a look. Um, and I think it's where I'm going with the – I'm going to try and go. Like just I want to have a wardrobe of just lots of different like shift dresses. And like always be in like a little like collared little dress, you know? Cute, cute. Also I'm obsessed with Twiggy, you know?

KIRI: Absolute icon.

TRAVIS: Icon.

KIRI: I saw her backstage at something once and I – my mouth was physically hanging open, you know, like a cartoon.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: I was like – because she – it like – it's gross and ageist to say 'even now', but like even now, her presence and her look and everything.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: She's a – she's like an actual – 'icon' gets thrown around a lot, but she is an icon.

TRAVIS: She is an icon. Did she smell good?

KIRI: I didn't get close enough. I was too aware of my own mouth hanging open. But I can confidently say yes. There's – there's no way that Twiggy stinks. There's just no way.

TRAVIS: Yeah, that is so true. That is so true. Like –

KIRI: Have you –

TRAVIS: Could you imagine? If you like met –

KIRI: Oh god, what a let down.

TRAVIS: Yeah, if you met Twiggy and you were like, 'there's this one thing, though, she fucking stinks.'

[Both laugh]

KIRI: I think I'd let her smell of cigarettes, is – is about the – the only thing that I'd be like, 'okay, Twiggy can smell of cigarettes.'

TRAVIS: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

KIRI: Um, what – have you got an item of clothing that you put on and you instantly feel amazing in it?

TRAVIS: Hm. Um, yes. I've got this black – this black kind of, uh, satin jumpsuit. And it – when you put a belt around the middle, just instantly you're like – oh – oh and it's so good. It's – yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. I love a jumpsuit. So yeah, that's my – that's my one, yeah.

KIRI: I love a jumpsuit. I have got so many of them and every time I put them on, I'm like, 'okay, we're not having any water for the rest of the day.'

TRAVIS: Yeah, yeah. That's the only thing, is you're like, 'oh okay, well I surrender.' Um, but sometimes – do you ever get a – oh, I don't know if – I don't know if you can do this with your anatomy, but is –

KIRI: With the like – with the clips in the – underneath?

TRAVIS: Oh yeah, and then you just have to just open up and then do like a little – yeah. Yeah, okay. Yeah.

KIRI: Yeah. Also like women can pee standing – or, sorry, people with vaginas can pee standing up.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: You just have to sort of like really lean into it.

TRAVIS: Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. Real. Real real real real real. Real. Real.

KIRI: Um, because I've got some like leotards that like – basically like a swimsuit that had like massive disc sequins somewhere, and they have those poppers underneath.

TRAVIS: Perfect.

KIRI: And that has been an absolute game changer.

TRAVIS: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

KIRI: So, um, this is – I'm going to start a petition for all jumpsuits and playsuits to have the poppers.

TRAVIS: Fully. Do – so you – you must be obsessed – are you obsessed with clothes? Obviously I don't – I don't know your – and I know it's interviewing me, but I'm intrigued. Like what made this be the topic of the podcast?

KIRI: Well I – I –

TRAVIS: Oh, there we go. There we go. For the viewers at home, there has been many sequences –

KIRI: I really love – because I – I – when I started doing comedy, I always wore something. I wanted the audience to know that I had made an effort, because I know that they had to be there.

TRAVIS: Yeah. Yes. Yes.

KIRI: And then I started doing sequins. And that sort of became a bit of a uniform and is – I always wear sequins now. But I – I just love – have always loved clothes and people – because I just think it's the – it's the most accessible form of art that we have.

TRAVIS: Yeah. Yeah.

KIRI: Because everyone partakes in it. Not everyone does – you know, I love to think that stand-up is actually, you know, the people’s art, but it’s not. Not everyone does it. They might watch it, but everybody puts clothes on, which means everybody makes a decision about how they want to be seen by the world. And I just think that is the most interesting thing in the world.

TRAVIS: Yeah, so good. Yes. Yes. Fully. Fully. And also like obviously comedy’s not like known for pulling a look, you know?

KIRI: Tell me about it.

TRAVIS: Like onstage, whereas like – yeah, I don’t need to fucking tell you. But like any stage – any other stage job, like looks are so crafted into like what you’re going to do. You’re going on stage. But comedy it’s always the opposite. They’re like, ‘how can I look the least like I’ve just like rolled up here?’ And so yeah, I imagine then wearing the sequins and stuff must’ve been like a real bold choice in comedy.

KIRI: It was at the time, but I think a really beautiful thing is happening in the last sort of four years, where people now – also because it’s less centred around sort of middle aged, cis white men who, you know, would wear a – just a t-shirt and jeans or a – a shirt and jeans, maybe. And now there’s more – I – like more – definitely more queer people, more women doing it. Just more marginalised voices who are used to making a statement about the way that they look to signify something to the world. They – they almost can’t be absent minded about the signals they send

out because just by being part of that marginalised group and walking onstage is a political statement.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: So you have to be aware of every other political statement you're wearing. But it's – it's a gorgeous thing of like – people getting really dressed up to do comedy.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: And, you know, like it being like – people being as excited to see what a comedian's wearing. And that's a very new thing. Um, and I love it.

TRAVIS: Nice.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: What is the best thing you've ever thrifted or secondhand that you've had? I bet you've got some absolute corkers.

TRAVIS: Oh, yeah. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. Um, I have a Burberry trench coat. Classic Burberry.

KIRI: Me too. £4, mine was.

TRAVIS: Oh, you beat me.

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: A tenner. A tenner.

KIRI: So good.

TRAVIS: And it's real. When I checked it out and I like went in and got it checked, and it's just one of those classic beige Burberry trench coats. And, you know, obsessive, right?

KIRI: So good. I know.

TRAVIS: Because they're so good you – you feel so good in the winter when you wear it. Like going to a fancy meeting and you're – you're like, 'oh.' Yeah, that's probably my best, yeah.

KIRI: That would take some beating. That's very impressive.

TRAVIS: Yeah, I'm like – I'm thinking of like the scraggily like fluffy jumpers. I'm like, 'they're good but they're like probably not worth like £700 and got them for a tenner, you know?'

KIRI: Um, so with your style, it sounds like your style – it seems like it's going to be a constant evolution revolution, right?

TRAVIS: Always. Yeah, I'm – I just, um, I was reading an interview by Alexis Stone, I think. The – the performance artist, drag queen. And, you know, it wasn't like a – a person that I would normally like think I'd be inspired by or I'd necessarily follow. I'd just come across it like when I was taking a shit, you know? Like something to use to just – things you scroll. And like she said like – she talked about how she reinvents herself over and over. And she said like, 'I don't understand why anyone can stay satisfied with themselves for that long.'

And, you know, in some ways it was like empowering and both sad. But I – I definitely resonate with the need to like create new

looks and create new vision. And so yeah, I can't see things changing, you know? I – my body's going to change, my face is going to change. That will change how I want to do it. My hair's going to change. And so with it is always going to be clothes too. Um, and I'm excited. I'm excited. This is – this podcast made me excited. There's like new – that's the reason I was doing this, you know?

Not just to have a lovely chat, but like because I think I'm on the cusp of like trying to be intentional about how I dress after a pandemic, where I haven't given a shit, you know? Literally would turn up in Zoom meetings with people that have known me for like years in work, and they've been – and you could see their mouths like being like – and they'd be like, 'are you alright?' I'm like, 'yeah, I'm fine. What's up?' And they're like, 'oh, you're just –' And I'm like, 'oh.' They'd like never seen me in a t-shirt and my glasses and no makeup and just like pyjamas for two years, you know?

And so after that time, you're naturally going to have a reinvention. Because that was almost a reinvention, you know? Picking two years to be in pyjamas, you know? I – I tried to dress up for the first two months of like the pandemic. And then like I was like, 'fuck this.' Like if I still have to try and go to work and do all these meetings about things that don't really exist, you know, I work in live art. Like, you know, all these meetings about things that are not happening yet, fuck off am I dressing up for it too. No. Shut up.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: It sounds like your, um, pandemic, you know, just is like a – what is it? Is it a chrysalis that a butterfly goes into like – shuts

down and then is like, 'okay, I'm going to become something new.'

TRAVIS: Hopefully.

KIRI: So many that's what you need. Every four years you'll just do a tracksuit phase and then it's a new look.

TRAVIS: Yes, exactly. Hopefully. And, you know, because for some – some – some of my friends – we shouldn't compare but we obviously do, everyone's gotten hotter during a pandemic. Like I – like everyone coming to these new events, I'm like, 'what the fuck?' Like, 'uh, I thought we were all agreeing that we were like disintegrating.' Like what – you know, like how have you gotten hotter during a pandemic? But I certainly know I haven't. I'm very aware. Like I just haven't. I've let myself go, I've lost my like vibe, my mojo a bit. So I'm hoping the butterfly moment happens. It's – you know, it's going to. I'm putting out in the universe, you know?

KIRI: I can't wait. I mean because if this is what you're like when you're in your cocoon stage, I'm already very excited by it. Is there an item of clothing, even with all these reinventions going on, that you can always see yourself wearing?

TRAVIS: Uh, yeah. My – my shoes. My – my Docs I can always – they've survived every single – I've had Docs since I was 14. Um, and they've survived every reinvention. Just the classic eight hole Doc. I can always find a way they're going to fit. And my Doc shoes. This is awkward because it looks like I – I have been sponsored by them recently, but I'm not saying it.

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: Ugh. Oh, let's just log off. Let's just log off. Um, but no –

KIRI: Is it a black eight – eight hole –

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: Yeah, perfect.

TRAVIS: I just – they've lasted the – they've lasted and I've not been paid to say this. I've just – the truth. I've just worn them for – forever. Because you can, you know, what I love is that you can like – in a really dressed-up outfit, a Doc brings it down and shows people that you're like not one to fuck with. And then like – I've even like – in a playsuit or like a little like short thing, a Doc's – it's just good.

And I think if you've got one of those days where like you're going to multiple things and you need one shoe, I do my Doc. Because a heel, I used to be that girl that would be like, 'I'm going to wear a heel all day, every day. And fuck you to think I can't do it.' And then like at 10pm I'm like hobbling. And if anyone looks I'm like, 'I'm fine. I'm fine. No, don't you assume. It's transphobic of you to assume that I can't walk in a heel all day. I was socialised in heels growing up,' you know? It's like, 'no, bish, your toe's hurting,' you know?

KIRI: Oh, that's so funny. Um, are there any trends that you're hoping never come back?

TRAVIS: Um, ooh, well it's – it's creeping back, isn't it? The low-rise jean. Oh, fuck off.

KIRI: So hideous.

TRAVIS: Fuck off. Fuck off. It's a low blow. It's a low blow. Oh my fuck – no. No. No. Because it's –

KIRI: I feel like it's so unfair that it hit me when I was a teenager, when you hate every part of your body. And now it's hitting me at the point where my metabolism has thoroughly slowed down.

TRAVIS: Well your metabolism's went, 'you know, what? It's –' Yeah, they tag teamed with the low-rise jean. They're like, 'metabolism out, low rise jean in.' But I want to be more controversial because everyone hates the low rise jean. And why – why are we not here to get a controversial sound bite?

Crocs. Stop. It's not okay. And it's – and people are trying to make it okay. I'm seeing lots of different types of people wearing a Croc. From different corners of the universe, you know? I'm seeing my Y2K internet girls in the clubs wearing Crocs, I'm seeing my Lucy & Yak peace-givers wearing Crocs. Everyone is doing the Crocs. And I just don't agree with it. And people are doing them at clubs, out at cafes, for dressing up. I'm – look, freedom of choice. Whatever. But – and I will – and do you know what? I'm going to call in my community. I'm seeing a lot of my LGBTQIA girls – my girls and my theys – doing it. And it's going to stop us getting our rights, do you know what I mean?

[Both laugh]

TRAVIS: I'm like, 'I wouldn't want to give us rights if I was in a platform Croc.' So we need to think tactically. We're in one of the most – we're in one of the most homophobic governments we have ever had and you want to wear a Croc?'

KIRI: It's the Section 28 of footwear.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KIRI: My – my friend sent me a picture and she's just, um, uh, Rachel Fairburn, who I do a podcast with, she sent me a picture of some leopard print ones. And I was like, 'I'm sorry, when did you sign up to train to be a nurse?' Because unless you're out going gardening or you're a nurse, those are the only possible times you can wear a Croc.

TRAVIS: It's this. I'm sorry. Enough is enough. You're going for brunch. You don't need a Croc. What – oh, I'm sorry. Obviously, disclaimer. If you're a nurse, you've got feet issues – all of this, yep yep yep yep yep yep. If, however, your feet would be fine in a trainer, put one fucking on. Put it on. Stop embarrassing yourself. No.

My – we're going – I went on holiday with my friends and all of them have got Crocs. And I was just – I was – and, you know, if there was ever a group of friends to persuade me that it's fashionable, I'll see. Maybe I'll take this back. This kit will come back and I'll have to do a notes apology and say 'look, two weeks ago – two weeks ago I was a different person. Um, but after speaking to the Crocs community, I realise that I've made some mistakes. I don't – so I've decided to donate £100 to the next person I see wearing Crocs.'

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Final question, then. Final question is what would you wear to be, um, buried or cremated in?

TRAVIS: A fucking morbid one to end on there.

KIRI: I know. Yeah. On a real high.

TRAVIS: Um, for me, when I make a fashion choice around an event, obviously not the wedding of when I was 17, but since then, a traditional event like this, it means I would die – pardon the pun – at the chance to be able to take the modern twist of a funeral. So it would always be black and it would be veiled and it would be lace. Because I'd obviously want to play on this idea of the funeral, which has all this image. So yeah, I think it would be like a veil – laced veil down to the floor. And then like a black laced bodysuit. Like or cat suit. And one of those cat suits where they're – they turn into the heel. You know when the heel is connected?

KIRI: Oh my – I love those so much.

TRAVIS: Yes, yes. And I would just be there. And then that's the glamour. They need to have a little bit of camp. Because you need to just have that twist. So I don't know what the joke – ah, okay. So like maybe I'm holding something like a gun or like I'm holding something that signifies how I died. And then like on the gun is written in like cursive black writing like, 'the bitch is dead.' Or like, 'she's gone,' you know? Something like – there has to be something there like that, you know?

KIRI: Oh my god, I absolutely – I – I'll be honest, I want you to be shot just so I can come along and see that now.

TRAVIS: Do you know what? I know a person. Just –

[Both laugh]

KIRI: You said you went to a rough state school, I believe you.

TRAVIS: Yeah. I'm in – I'm in hiding right now, actually.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: How much of a babe is Travis? And I think we can all agree it's worth following them on Instagram if you don't already just in case they have a clear-out and sell their clothes. I'm so excited for that to happen. Also I can't wait to see them returning to their iconic 17 year old chic uniform too. You know, I think before all these chats, I was sort of thinking that style, um, and self-expression was sort of a destination that you arrive at. But I've started to feel like it's a journey, guys, that you – you – it never stops because who you are changes all the time. She says, sounding like a magnet on a fridge. I apologise.

It is time for some of your lush messages because we don't need to hear any more from me. Um, this is a great one. Lovely email here from Sophie. So Sophie says – heads up, there's going to be some nice things in here about me and I'm going to pretend that I hate it, but I am reading it out.

'Hi, long time listener, first time writer. Firstly, the podcast is so interesting. I started listening because I love Kiri' – get in line – 'but it's fascinating and it's making me think about my style choices, when before I would not have thought that fashion and my life has much of an intersection. Secondly, I just want to praise Kiri.' Oh, go on, then. So embarrassing.

'I actually first heart of Kiri when you were MCing one of the nights at the Bristol Comedy Garden a few years ago.' Great gig.

Um, 'even though your sections were short and sweet, I had never felt so connected and represented by a comedian.' Oh, what a nice thing to say. Um, 'then I started following you online wherever possible, and I realised that you were wearing some excellent sequin costumes and you weren't a size zero.' How dare you, I'm actually a size two.

Uh, Sophie says, 'maybe that meant I could also wear sequins – brackets [I blame all my Isolated Hero]' – oh, I love this. 'I blame – brackets [I blame all my Isolated Heroes purchase on you.]' I take full blame for that. Um, 'and recently I'm becoming so much more body confident,' and Sophie says, 'including wearing my first bikini this year, from The Cult nonetheless.' This is so rough. I refer to Snag Tights as a cult, okay? I apologise if anyone from Snag is listening, um, but it's because the people who buy your tights are so effusive about them, it's like they've drunk Kool Aid. So that is the reference there. I saw they were doing bikinis. Very exciting.

Sophie says, 'in fact, I was featured on their socials in it.' Oh my god, I'm going to go and seek you out because I genuinely have been looking at all those brilliant people in those bikinis and been like, 'everybody looks like an absolute babe,' so I'm going to go and track you down now like a creep. Um, and Sophie says, 'I genuinely –' oh, this is so lovely. 'I genuinely cite you as one of my influences when I think about my journey with body positivity. So thank you for all you're doing for women in making us feel good about who we are.' Oh my gosh, this is so nice.

Um, 'I hope you know that you are genuinely doing so much with your comedy. It's so relatable, so funny, and you always look excellent whilst you do it.' That is so nice. I'm not sure how relatable my new stuff is. I've got ten minutes on rescue chickens. Oh, so Sophie says, 'just wanted to say thanks, really, for making

that fat lass feel quite a lot less shit and alone.’ Oh, mate. ‘Oh, P.S., I’ve seen that you’ve started playing rugby. Congrats. I played for years until an injury stopped me. Look up Rugette RFC if you want some kit made for women by women.’ Interesting. I was the second row if you ever need any hints. Thanks so much. Sophie.’ Sophie, what a lovely, lovely message.

Gosh, I’m quite, um, yeah, I’m quite – quite emotional over that. What a lovely thing to say. Um, it’s nice that, um, I – I’ve made anyone feel nicer about the body they’re in. I – yeah, I – I just – I hope we can all get to a stage at one point where we are happy with the – the shells that we’ve come in, um, however changing and – and difficult they can feel like they are. Um, I’d – rugby advice. Oh, mate. What’s your advice for what do you do if you dislocate your finger on the first time you try and do it? And then manage to sustain an injury every time since. But I absolutely love it. Um, so yes. If I, um, if I ever get past the point where I’m just going to training just because it’s a bit of fun and I like getting sweaty, I will hit you up, Sophie. And I’m definitely going to go and find you on the Cult Instagram. I’m sorry, Snag people.

Um, you should all go and follow us, though, on Instagram. @whoareyouwearingpod, especially this week, because Travis has sent some absolute beauts over. So we always put up, um, pictures, uh, over the week of outfits that our guests have sent us and – yeah, we’ve got some corkers coming up. If you want to write to us as well, you can email whoyouwearingpod@gmail.com. I cannot promise that I won’t read it out. And I cannot promise I won’t get weirdly emotional about it.

Oh, we’ve had a five star review as well from Katie, who says, ‘fantastic podcast. I’ve really enjoyed the show over the last few

weeks. It's a great podcast and listening to Kiri and her guests talking about the fashion highs and lows and all the reminiscing about past fashions especially has been fab. I'm an All Killa No Filla fan' – yay – 'and literally only ever listen to true crime podcasts, so this has been a really lovely change.' Yeah, some time off murder. 'And I've discovered some fab Instagram accounts from listening. Coco Fennell in particular.' Right? 'I can't decide if I like her dresses or her house the most.' I know. I know. Yeah, so good. Um, I've been – yeah, pouring over everything she posts. She's such a good egg.

Um, it is time to sing from the rafters about an indie business that I love. So please get to know KMabel. So that's the letter 'k' and a dash and then Mabel, like the girls name. You can find them on their website and on Insta. Now I first found them because of their stunning earrings. And they're a really good mix of like chic, contemporary metal work and then they've got big like statement pieces of flowers and big plastic pieces as well. Um, I've got a pair that are essentially massive butterfly wings and they always get compliments.

So since I first saw them, they've also started making accessories for men and bags. Things like that. They're made to order, they're sustainably made with vegan leather as well, so pretty guilt-free shopping there. But not only do they make beautiful stuff. This is a company with purpose. Because every sale that KMabel makes, they put money towards hearing aids for young people who have hearing lots in Dakar, Senegal, and Mozambique.

Um, and the founder as well, who speaks five languages, just dead cas, um, they've recently set up K-lam Able. Um, this is a project working with young people with hearing impairment to ensure

that they're properly supported in their learning environments. It's really inspiring stuff. Do check them out.

I'm going to be back with another episode next Monday. And before then, could you do me a favour, please? Um, could you give us a nice review wherever you get your podcasts? It really helps with stuff. Um, right. That is so much of me. Uh, you've got a really special chat next week, uh, with Rosie Jones. See you then.

[Upbeat electronic music]

Who Are You Wearing is produced by Jo Southerd, the artwork is by Mary Phillips, and the music is by Ani Glass. This has been a Little Wander production.