

Who Are You Wearing – Darren Harriott

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN: Hello and Welcome to the Who Are You Wearing podcast with me, Kiri Pritchard-McLean. This week I'm chatting to stand-up comedian, actor, and presenter Darren Harriott. This was another big old chat where we cover everything from jelly shoes to Wallabees. No idea what wallabies are? I didn't know what they were either. But Darren describes them with so much enthusiasm that you'll never forget what they're called.

This interview was recorded in April and May of 2021, because the internet was down in Darren's area for about six weeks, um, so it's a two parter that has been seamlessly edited together by Jo, the producer. Now Darren was at home in London and I was in my cupboard because I am a class act. We have tried to cut this chat down, but it is a long one because Darren is a really old friend of mine and a fashion nerd. So I really hope you enjoy me asking Darren Harriott, 'who are you wearing?'

[Music stops]

DARREN HARRIOTT: There was a sports brand from the 90s called Mizuno.

KIRI: Yes.

DARREN: And, uh, it's just such a weird name now to think about it. Yeah, Mizuno. And I remember I had a – a tracksuit for it. It was a Mizuno track – it was like a jumper and it had like the matching bottoms. And, uh, the bottoms were, uh, a rip off of the Adidas – remember the Adidas poppers? That you'd pop the side of the

Adidas and they would – they were like stripper pants almost. Um, they – those gigolo trousers. You'd rip the sides.

And, um, I remember just having that as a kid and – and feeling like every time I wore it, it was an important – I was important. It was like a special moment. I felt good. And I – you know, I was like eight. What was I, you know, what was – what was going on in my life where this tracksuit was like, 'oh, okay, I am ready to go. I'm an important person right now.' Um, I'd say it was that tracksuit, um, because I knew – I knew even then that that was not the tracksuit you wear every day.

Um, and probably like – I really cared about, um, I think they were – what were they called? LA Gears? With the lights in the shoes? I remember that – those were also – those were like, 'oh, these are the – you know, these are the fancy trainers.' You don't – you don't wear these to the park, Darren. You're not – you don't do that. No no no no no. These are the real fancy trainers.' And I remember when the, um, when one of the lights stopped working. And back then, you know, if the lights stopped working you'd just – you had to bin the shoes. Because they – they – you know, they weren't – they weren't made so you could recharge – change the batteries in them. They had one set of batteries.

And, um, I remember the – the left foot's stopped working but the right one did and I – my mum always says that – she says that I – I tried to do everything with my right foot. Like she said, 'oh, you would – you would walk but you would like purposely try and like put your right foot out and then like scrape your left behind as you – just because you wanted everyone to see that you still had one light going.'

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Oh, that's so cute. So it sounds like you had a strong sense of style as a kid, then.

DARREN: I think I was a – I think I was aware of – of style and – I think I was just aware of how clothing can make you feel good as a kid. Um, I remember when I was in primary school, I would say year 6, I had a teacher. His name was Mr. Nolan. Really nice guy. And, um, I remember it was a non-uniform day.

And I remember non-uniform days were so important to me in school. Um, because we all used to wear, obviously, the same uniform. And then every now and again like whenever it was like a Red Nose Day type thing, we would have non-uniform day. And I remember my teacher, Mr. Nolan, my year 6 teacher. He said that I was the best-dressed, uh, kid in the class. And I – I think I was wearing like a waistcoat type thing. Um, with like a jumper. And he said that and I still remember it now, that he said I was the best-dressed kid. I, um, yeah, he said I was the best-dressed kid what, 20-odd – 21 years ago. And I'm like, 'yeah, I've still got that.' I wish he wrote it down.

KIRI: He can never take it away from you.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: So who dressed you, then?

DARREN: I mean mums always dress you really cute, don't they? When you're a kid. Uh, my mum used to put me in a lot of like, um, like overalls and jelly sandals. My mum had a thing about putting me and my brother in jelly sandals until we were like nine.

She just loves these little jelly sandals. And you look at the photos and you go, 'oh, we look adorable. We really do.'

And then, um, I – I think – so because we – we didn't have much money when I was growing up, a lot of my, uh, clothing I got at Christmas and like birthdays. But usually Christmas. So my uncle would, um, normally just turn up on Christmas day. And my uncle was like always into like thrift shops and all that sort of stuff. He would just turn up and go, 'Darren, here's your – here's your bag of stuff.' And it was just full of clothes normally. And, you know, um, you know what uncles are like. They don't really pay attention to the size you are. So there was a lot of stuff that, you know, probably would only fit me now.

But I remember just going through all of these bags of clothing and just trying. Trying them on. Trying all this stuff on. And – and it – I remember like looking in the mirror and trying different tops on and, uh, I remember there was like a – a shirt that I really liked but it – it was just far too big. And I was just excited about getting big enough to finally fit in this shirt. And it was stuff like that that, um, really kind of I think influenced me as a – as a kid when it comes to clothing.

KIRI: And was there anything that you were made to wear that you hated?

DARREN: My mum used to put me in sailor outfits as a kid. That was strange. I mean it's – it's cute. I've seen the photos. Again, cute. But I just never really understood why she was putting me in sailor outfits.

[Both laugh]

DARREN: It's such a mum type thing to do. She just – I think my mum just really wanted like cute boys or – I think she definitely wanted a girl at least. Because I used to have plaits. So I used to have my hair plaited. I used to have like, um, uh, I think my mum and my dad just wanted me to have like dreadlocks. So my mum used to plait my hair. So a lot of people used to think I was a girl when I was really young. Because I was in like jelly sandals and like overalls and plaited hair when I was like five. Um, very adorable kid. I – I think.

KIRI: Was there an item of clothing when you were a kid or a teenager that you just never wanted to take off? That you love love loved?

DARREN: Well when I was in high school, I went to one of those – I'm sure most high schools were like this, but I went to one of those high schools where, um, because our school was so strict on uniform, you – you would try and wear things that looked a bit like the uniform but quite cool. So at my school – so generally you were supposed to wear like sort of black, um, normal black trousers, you know, that people wear. Sort of suit trousers. That was it. Because our school had blazers. We wore blazers and whatnot.

So what happened was a lot of kids started buying what we called shiny trousers. And shiny trousers were – they were black, but they were – they were a bit shiny. And they didn't have a seam going down or anything. So they looked really cool. They almost looked a bit like jeans. And I remember – and the teachers never told you off for them.

And I remember getting some of those and a pair of, uh, Wallabees. And, um, Wallabees were the saviour for the poor

kids, because we couldn't afford the cool Rockports. Because Rockports were like £220 for these school shoes. But Wallabees came out, they were more fashionable than Rockports and they were 20 quid. So I remember having like these Wallabees and these shiny trousers. And I loved them. I loved it so much because I felt so, uh, finally like really in and cool.

I would purposely – when I finished school, go out with my mates and we would all wear our school uniform, just so I could get more wear out of it. Because I knew that my shiny trousers and my, uh, my Clark's – well, not Clark's at the time, but, uh, my Wallabees were cool to every school. So like every – everybody who saw me – saw us, knew, 'oh, this is – you know, these are the cool kids from Perryfields.' So I would wear it a bit – which sounds really sad. But I would wear my school uniform a little bit longer. No one does that. But yeah, I – I'd probably say definitely the – the Wallabees.

KIRI: I love it. I've just had to Google image them because I didn't know what a Wallabee was. But it's like a – a Clark's sort of like that –

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: That sort of like suede shoe, right? I know – I know what it is now.

DARREN: They – yeah, so we had – we had suede ones. But back then they were the ones that were made out of like, uh, you know, they were like PVC. It was just the shape. It was just the shape that you wanted. And everybody – what did it for us was the kids who had the £220 Rockport boots were no longer

wearing them. And they were all wearing the same Wallabees. And it was great.

It just – I remember it just took over the school. Everybody had a pair. If you didn't have a pair, people were – people were questioning why you didn't have a pair. Because they were 20 quid and they're so cool. And I – I loved mine. I even remember wearing mine when we – when I – like if me and my mates, we'd go out or whatever, just hang out on the street, I would wear mine with like my – with like jeans and stuff. Because it was – it was still that cool. Um, but yeah, that – that's something that I remember really, really loving.

KIRI: Yeah, I just – I weirdly didn't know the name of them, but they – yeah, they're like the moccasin things. Just having a look now.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: They've got a really cool pair of like mustard yellow and purple ones these days. So I think you should bring back the Wallabee.

[Both laugh]

DARREN: I'm up for that. I've got a pair.

KIRI: And so when you were a teenager, obviously the Wallabees are huge, but what were the other big trends? Did you go in for any of them? Were you ever a goth?

DARREN: Um, yeah. So I – my goth phase is, uh, was – do you remember – I'm sure you remember – I'm one of the biggest My

Chemical Romance fans. Like I legitimately love them. I've got all their albums. I know all their songs. Um, you know, and so when the Black Parade came out, that album in what, 2010 was it? And it was at number one, I had a mad – that was when I got into them. And I went through like a – I wouldn't say a goth phase because I never like, you know, uh, painted my nails or anything like that. But I – I exclusively wore skateboarder brands and, um, you know, I had, uh, lots of chain wallets. Um, you know, had the really baggy trousers. All my trainers, I – I traded in all my sort of Nikes and all that stuff. I didn't wear them anymore. I wore Vans. Like DVSSs, the big chunky ones. I had no intention of skateboarding because I thought it was dangerous.

But I went all in. I wore, um, Travis Barker's, uh, stars and straps t-shirts. All of my caps back then were the proper skater ones. And I made sure I kept the sticker on. Because those – those new-era sticker caps were just – they just completely took over. And, uh, I was a proper skater – skater kid for at least I'd say three years. Uh, and I – oh – ah, this is – ah, this is really – it's really douche-y to say. I used to, uh, remember when, um, those earplugs came out?

KIRI: Oh yeah, the tunnels?

DARREN: And, uh, everybody had those – the tunnels, yeah. Yeah. Well again, I was like, 'I really want them, but I don't want them.' So what I did was I used to wear the fake ones.

[Both laugh]

DARREN: So you know when they, uh, they get like – you know, it looks like – not the – not the – the big tunnel. When they have like a stick. It looks like a stick's going through their ear or

whatever, you know? They have like a spike. I used to get the – the fake spikes and you would like twist it on. And it would look like there was a spike in your ear. And I would have two of them in my ear. And people were like, ‘woah, you got your ears –’ and I’m like – and I never told people they were fake. Ever. I would always go along with it. Yeah, oh, so embarrassing.

KIRI: It’s so funny because all these – there’s a lot of effort that goes into that skater look. There’s lots of like – there’s lots to the subculture. And you’re painting the picture so well of what you would’ve worn and where you would’ve hung out. But also you have like the most charismatic smile of anyone I know. So I just imagine all these sort of like, you know, like emo-y kids and you with this like 1000 watt smile in the middle of them all.

[Both laugh]

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Did you, um, did you have a rebellious phase when you were growing up? And if you – if you did, did it – did it come out in what you wore at all?

DARREN: So the – the – my sort of rocky sort of gothy type era, you know, uh, 2009, 2010 type. Around then. Was my favourite time in terms of, um, my – my fashion. Because it was – it was the first time I felt like I wasn’t following a crowd. You know me and all my mates, when we started our gang we all wore hoodies with – with names printed on. We – we’d all wear the same bandanas round our heads. We’d all do this. We’d all dress exactly the same.

And – and then even when I went to college it was kind of similar. Um, everybody was, you know, I used to work at a – a JDSports so, you know, I was dressing pretty much the same as everybody who worked there. We were all mates. And – and then when I left that job and I – you know, I was jobless for a bit, uh, in around 2008, 2009, I kind of got into more into rock music and whatnot. And it was – it was on my own accord. I wasn't, you know, I wasn't looking at any of my mates or any friends and going, 'oh, I'm going to dress like them.' It was just me going, 'oh, this is nice. I like this.' Oh, it was nice. I remember just finding that all out myself.

And I think that played a massive part in the way that I dress now and my uh, uh, and how I dress as an individual. Because I don't really follow any crowds anymore. Because I spent all of my – all of my teen years and, um, my – bits of my, uh, early – really early 20s following people. And then just finding this sort of, uh, this rock influence on my own. It was just me. And the good thing was, none of my friends wanted anything to do with it because they were still very much hip-hop guys. So they wanted nothing to do with it. So it was just – it was just great. I – I really enjoyed it.

KIRI: Like so would you be hanging around with loads of like your mates who loved hip-hop and dressed accordingly and then you would be there in your sort of like – doing your own thing but still hanging around with them?

DARREN: Yeah. It was – it was exactly that. And I think, uh, because of the – the style, so there was this thing where – I almost call – describe it as like Limp Bizkit chic, right? Where, uh, it's – it's really douchey. Very Fred Dursty. It was all sort of hip-hop and rock had kind of came together a bit. So the – the styles were – they were very heavily influenced by each other, especially with like the caps and the big t-shirts.

KIRI: New Rock.

DARREN: Yeah, New rock. It was all very heavily influenced. So there wasn't too – it – I didn't look too insane compared to them. Uh, and, uh, but you could definitely tell that it was influenced. You'd just imagine like a bunch of hip-hop guys and there's just me like – with like my nails painted black like with my hair turned to the side.

KIRI: So thinking about your style now, what – what age do you think that started showing up at?

DARREN: Oh, um, that's a really good question. I think I spent a lot of time in my early-mid 20s really trying to find my feet still. You know, ten, 11 years ago I was 20, 21. You don't really know who you are that well then. Um, it takes you a while. So I think I spent a lot of years going through different kinds of looks and whatnot.

And I definitely went through – and I'm sure you probably did this. Uh, well yeah, you did. I remember in the early days of stand-up where you kind of – you'd dress for the job. Um, you'd dress more to do stand-up. You're not dressing for yourself. Um, we dress for ourselves now onstage. Um, but before, you know, I don't know, ten plus years ago, you're very much dressing just to get through the gig and you don't want anyone to notice you for your clothing.

And I think that – that was a – a big factor in – because obviously, you know, I wanted to make it as a comedian. I wanted to be successful. But, um, in terms of what I wore onstage, I just wore sort of my level of basic just to get the job done. I would never have worn anything that was too bright, too crazy, too – because like my thing was I didn't want to wear anything onstage that

would draw, uh, so much attention that people would forget that I'm a comedian or I'm funny. Or draw in any heckles and whatnot.

And I think that – that probably was the main factor for my early to mid-20s in terms of how I – I dressed. That was the number one thing, really. And then as I – I think as I just become – became more confident and more eager and more desperate to – to really not only express myself and my words and my actions onstage, in how I dressed as well. And I – I think I'm finally putting that together. It's getting – I'm getting much better at it. I definitely don't think I'm there, uh, completely yet, but I can see the, uh, the evolution and the – and the growth, uh, from that.

Um, so I would say – I would say now I'm at the best place, uh, in – in terms of fashion and confidence onstage. Um, I've never been here. And also it's really been nice to see, you know, the likes of yourself. How you have evolved completely. I mean, you know, you can see – you can see how you would dress onstage what, ten plus years ago compared to how you dress now. And even, uh, even, uh, Rachel. Rachel Fairburn. When we did, uh, we did, uh, the show the other day. I saw Rachel's outfit. I was like, 'look at you.' Like it's just nice.

Because I remember how we all used to dress back in the day. And then to see how we dress now, it's so much more – it's so much more than just like fashion. It's – it's an expression of yourself in a way that is understated. It comes across understated because you're onstage doing stand-up comedy and everyone's listening to what you're saying. But it's kind of – it's kind of not as well. Because it's – it's this complete picture of you onstage. And, um, it's so nice to see, because I feel like we – we're getting to see – we're getting to see all of you. I like honesty and truth on – on a comedy stage. And, um, and now I – I really enjoy it when I see

your honesty and truth in how you dress as well as your jokes and your material. Because I feel like that gives a – a much more complete picture.

KIRI: Yeah, because when you're – you start doing comedy, you work so hard to find your voice. And then you find it. And now I feel like people are concentrating as well on, 'well I can find my voice in terms of the way I look as well. Like what story I want my outfit and my hair or my makeup or whatever to tell.' Because they don't need to be in competition or distracting. They can actually help each other.

DARREN: Kiri, can I ask you a question, right? So I – okay. When you think of, uh, female stand-up comedians, right? I – I was talking to some other, uh, some comics about this the other day. And, um, do you remember the first female comedian you saw on TV in this country who was dressed like – I'll say really girly? Who was like – who came onstage and you were like, 'wow, they are – they are wearing like – this is like a proper outfit'? Because I've heard numerous different names. Who's – who's your – who do you remember – think it was?

KIRI: Andi Osho doing Live at the Apollo.

DARREN: That's the same one. I'm so happy you said that. Okay, so, um, I was – I was talking to, uh, name drop, Katherine Ryan, and we were on Guessable. And, um, me, Sarah, and Katherine were talking. And they were talking about the first time they saw a – a female stand-up looking really girly onstage. And Sarah said it was Katherine Ryan. Said it was – 'Katherine Ryan was the first person I remember seeing, going, "wow, look at her all dressed-up."' And I was like, 'it was Andi Osho.' I remember Andy – was it – what was it, 2010?

KIRI: Yeah, I think so.

DARREN: Andi Osho – maybe. She – she was wearing like a – I remember she came out and I went, ‘woah, she’s dressed like she’s about to sing a Bond theme.’ Like she went so all-out. I think it was like the black – maybe it was the black sequin dress. But that really stood out to me. And I was like, ‘oh wow, this feels like a moment.’ Which sounds crazy because you think of everything that’s happened between, you know, 2010 and now. And you go, ‘so what was – what was it like in 2000? 2005?’ That we both remember Andi Osho being the first sort of female stand-up on telly who was really dressed up. And you could tell that she had dressed for herself. And this was not – this was not dressing up for stand-up. It really stood out to me, that moment.

KIRI: Yeah, and when I did Apollo and I wore my, uh, like leotard with a Welsh flag and a cape –

DARREN: Loved it.

KIRI: I – like I knew as soon as I had that made, I was like, ‘if I ever get to do Live at the Apollo this is the outfit.’ Because it’s such a clear mission statement of how I see myself as basically a Welsh superhero. But also like someone who’s entirely dressing for themselves. That’s not in Topshop. Like that’s not a – like capes are – and leotards aren’t in fashion. It’s just me being like, ‘this is who – this is my brand, I guess. This is who I am and how I feel most like me.’ Do you know what I mean? That’s so important.

DARREN: I – I would say that’s probably the biggest statement outfit on any Apollo, your outfit. Nobody’s even come close to that. Everybody else is just – we all – we’re all just basic compared

to that. You just came out, you had – you had a cape as well, right? Was it a cape?

KIRI: I had a cape, yeah.

DARREN: Yeah, man. That's – that's it. Everybody knows – everybody knows Kiri Pritchard-McLean has arrived, ladies and gentlemen. That's a great – that's a solid – solid look. It – and that's what you should do for shows like that. Again, it's – it's your material. You're – you know, you're not in control. And it's a head – it's head to toe. It's head to toe. Your moment, it's – you're coming out, your music's playing, you're blaring, 'have it, come on,' it's great, man. It's great.

KIRI: Are you like me, then? In that I am far more comfortable being over-dressed than under-dressed in a situation? I would rather be way more over-dressed than everyone. I wouldn't feel self-conscious. But if I was under-dressed I would be like, 'we need to go home.'

DARREN: Yes. Yes. Uh, you – especially with like when you did Apollo, you always want people to be like, 'ooh.' Like I want – I want to hear that. I want people to be like, 'oh, that's really nice, you know?' I – I see guys and, you know, god bless them. But they're just, you know, in like a normal gig's shirt and – and fine, that's you. You do that. I – I can't have that. I can't have that. I can't do a gig like that. Other telly appearances, other little gigs, fine. You can just wear whatever you think is just, you know, just enough for you to get to the gig and get back comfortably. Fine.

But when it comes to something big like that, oh no no no no no. I need – I'm wearing this because I want some compliments. I want to stand out. I want people to know that, you know, I have

arrived. And that – that makes me feel so much better. Because I know then that no matter what happens, at least I look good and at least I stood out.

Because, um, and I think, you know, you have this as well, where we just think because, you know, there's a lot of comedians, there's a lot of funny people, there's a lot of people who can pretty much do what we do in some way. But, you know, they don't dress like us. And, you know, we stand out and we need to make sure that we have that on top of it.

Because if there's ten comics that they want for whatever, they can go, 'yeah, funny funny funny funny funny. Oh, but, you know, she's also going to look really good. She's going to look amazing because you know how she dresses like this. Oh, that's going to work really well.' You – it's just the little things like that that really stick out to me, especially when you do a show like the Apollo, which everyone's watching.

I mean today's comedians are very lucky because, you know, everyone's super stylish. But back when we were starting, everybody – everybody dressed like garbage. We all just dressed horrendously. A lot of ripped jeans and like really bad blazers over t-shirts and all that sort of stuff.

KIRI: Ugh.

DARREN: So yes. Yeah, that – that – yeah, that was horrible. Who buys a – who buys a full suit and just doesn't wear the trousers ever? Like, 'I'll just wear the jacket with some denims.' It was such a weird look to me.

KIRI: But that started – that look came from The Strokes and in particular Albert Hammond Jr. used to wear like vintage t-shirts, usually turned inside out, and really fitted – a vintage suit jacket with jeans. And they all looked amazing. And then what you have is guys looking at it and going, ‘that’s cool.’ And then sort of like a weird diluted version in Burton.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: And then people buying like, ugh, gross, hoodies with suit jackets attached to them. And they never fit right. And they all just look like – they all just looked like a really – a guy who’s just left his wife and has started doing stand-up comedy.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: Even if they were like 18 they looked like that.

DARREN: Yeah. Yeah. That’s exactly – I forgot about the suit jackets with the hood on. They were like, ‘let’s get rid of the middle man. Let’s just put on a hood on the back –’ and you – you just saying ‘Burton’ made me go, ‘ugh, Burton.’ I remember that place.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: When I think of you now, I think of you as being like fashionable as well. Like someone who – who like doesn’t necessarily wear a trend just because, but like explores trends and goes with stuff. And is not afraid of colour and is not afraid of sort of like unorthodox, I guess, colours or items of clothing on men. I think you’ll play with that stuff. So when did that style appear?

DARREN: Um, I honestly think that style – I would say it's relatively new. Um, my – I – I just – for some reason, I just really got into animal print. I don't know how it happened. I don't know. I mean does anybody really know when they really got into animal print or were into animal print? When – do you remember when you really got into animal print?

KIRI: I remember I would never wear it when I was younger. And I think it was about the time that I started – I – do you know what? I do, I remember the exact item I got. It was from Peacock's and it was a cardigan. And it was grey leopard print. And I think it was about the time that I was listening to like the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and things like that. And they went for sort of like –

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: That vintage-y 40s thing. But punk is quite – leopard print's quite punk, so I had seen it on them. And I bought this – god, I used to wear that cardigan so much. And it was made of cashmelon, as in 3% cashmere and the rest was nylon. And I – I would still have it today if I hadn't been doing a show in uni and I just threw it on the side and it was in one of those dressing rooms that – you know the ones with bulbs round the mirror?

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: And it – and it burnt through on the bulb and it absolutely stunk. And I think it's definitely like made me infertile just from the – like the – the fumes from cashmelon burning. What about you?

DARREN: Cashmelon. That's amazing. Um, I'd say five years ago I really got into animal print and camo type colours. And then, um,

because I used to just be sort of always black, you know, uh, navy, really dark navy. But I wouldn't even wear like red. Like even like a red hoodie would be just a bit much. I'd look at it and just go, 'this is a bit much. It's an all-red hoodie.' And then I used to get into – I used to really bother me about, uh, getting things dirty. Um, so I would – never really wore anything too bright because I was always worried about like just dirt.

And just – so like – even with like if I do a TV thing now, I'm very sceptical on wearing anything that can show any sweat. I don't – I'm not like a big sweater, but I've been on – I did a show before where it was four hours recording straight, and I remember there were massive sweat marks. So I just had to sit with my arms together and my like – folded. I looked like I was freezing cold but I was just trying to cover up whatever sweat marks.

Um, but honestly, I wish I knew where, um, this new – I'd probably have to say Kanye probably played a part in it, subconsciously. Just because he was wearing, you know, uh, pinks and lots of really bright pastel colours. He had his own brand that was based around pastel colours. So maybe, um, him wearing those sort of colours in like '06, '07 really got me thinking more about it. And then, um, I never – probably didn't feel comfortable enough until I was in my like maybe mid-20s to really start branching out. And – and you know, like now I'll wear, you know, I'll wear pinks. Pink stuff and like a yellow and purple. Um, it's quite a – it's really freeing, that I – I wish I was like that when I was younger.

But, um, I think I can kind of wear anything and – and pull it off. It's not necessarily that I think I can pull it off, I've just got the confidence, um, when wearing it. But, uh, it's really exciting. And I feel – I kind of feel sorry for people who – their – I think

everybody wants to explore a bit more in what they wear. You speak to anyone and they'll say, 'oh, you know, I'm a – oh, I'm a bit shit, I'm a bit basic. But my agent says it all that time, ah, I'm a basic dad dresser.' But like he cares about clothing, he just – he's just assigned himself the dad dresser. But um, it's – yeah, it's really exciting and I – I think, you know, in ten years' time, or even like in a few years' time, where I will be fashion-wise and what I'll be exploring then is, um, it's super exciting.

And I – you know, I look at especially famous men in the media and what they wear a lot of the time. You look at some – you look at, you know, I always think of the One Direction guys. When you think of what they were wearing in – in 2010 or 2009 with the – the weird scarves around their necks and the – the horrible hair dos. And the – and now you look at the way they dress now and how they've sort of evolved. Obviously they've gone through, you know, a level of fame and around designers that we would never have met. But if you look at like a say a Harry Styles to what he is now, there's just been so – there's been so many changes, I guess.

And I quite like the fact that with what I'm wearing now, I like to think that if I look back in ten years' time you wouldn't be able to tell the era. I quite – I quite like that. You wouldn't be able to go, 'I think that was Darren in 2020.' You wouldn't really know just because of what I'm wearing. But I say that now and in, you know, ten years' time everybody's wearing bloody silver space suits or something, I don't know. It's – it's very obvious that what's happened.

KIRI: Yeah, I – we're – as Busted predicted, we're all living underwater.

DARREN: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: So when you're putting together your like looks now, is it – because I've – I've sat next to you in makeup and you barely get anything.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: Like hair and makeup wise. Like you don't get – so I normally ask people like, 'how much of a part does hair and makeup play,' but with you I think it's accessories. I think you're really particular about your – you're not like – you don't throw loads on, but like they're very considered.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: Do you know what I mean?

DARREN: Yeah. Um, hair and – hair and makeup's always a fun one as well because now that I've got – because – so you've seen it before where I'm in hair and makeup and sometimes I'm in there and I'm in there for like 30 seconds. And I – I got to a point where I was getting a little bit annoyed with it. Because I felt like people were kind of half-assing my makeup. So I would walk in and because I'm generally, you know, my hair's always gone so you don't have to – my head's gone. And my – my beard's always done by itself, all what happens is I go in, they take a bit of the shine off, right? They always have to take the shine off. And then that's it. Or sometimes they might do a little bit of powder.

So now I'm – I'm actually a bit more adamant. I – 'no no no, do me up the way you would do up anybody else.' Like I – like if I would,

you know, you go in there and I said to them – I said, ‘look, I’ve seen the way – not only white women done up a different way, because obviously you’ve got to put lots of makeup on and do eyes and all that. But even like, um, white men. I’ve seen how much time they get. Just give me half of that and make me look good.’ Because I could – I could notice the difference.

KIRI: Yeah.

DARREN: I would – you know, you see people sometimes and they look like wax figures backstage because there’s so much makeup on. I’m like, ‘make me look like that. Because all I’m doing is just sitting in the back with nothing to do. So, um, yeah. But, um, yeah. For me mainly it’s – it’s sort of – it’s usually I get to sort my earrings out, I always have my outfits ready. I always know what I want to wear. And, you know, um, I always have a back-up but the back-up I never – you know, the back-up you never want.

So I’m always in there and I take into account – I take into account the sort of show it is. So if I’m – if I’m standing in the show, if the – if it’s a head to toe type show, then I – that’s – that’s the longest one for me. The hardest part, really, is footwear. Am I wearing trainers? Am I wearing shoes? Does it match my shirt or my jacket? That’s normally it. Uh, the socks as well. Am I – so like I – say when I do Guessable for example, my – you can see everything. So you – you know, socks matter, if I’m wearing socks.

Um, and yeah. I normally try and sort it out the day before, because I never – I never decide on the day. Uh, I know people who do that sometimes. They turn up with like, you know, a couple of dresses and then they turn up and they go, ‘hm, I’m in the –’ no no, I’ve never done that. I know exactly what I want. And it’s always the first thing on my mind as well. So whenever we

turn up to a shoot – or turn up to, uh, record something, as soon as I get in there, I open my suitcase and I – and, you know, you give to the runner and go, ‘here’s my clothing. Let’s get that done.’ Because if there’s any issue I want to know immediately what the issue is so I’ve got as much time, uh, as I can to, uh, to sort that out.

Um, but yeah, it’s – it’s so strange that the clothing is always my number one thing. Anything I do on TV, which is – it’s not a good thing, is it? It’s always the number one thing. Yeah, jokes, fine. Yeah, banter, fine. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. But let’s sort this out. And, um, I do get annoyed on, uh, on – if I – if I turn up and, um, I get asked – my number one choice isn’t allowed. Because somebody else is wearing green.

KIRI: Oh, yeah.

DARREN: It’s like – and I’m just like, ‘oh, come – oh, like –’ I mean I know this is like proper blue M&M type talk we’re having here.

[Both laugh]

DARREN: I get it to the people at home that are just like, ‘look at this fancy pants guy. You were a security guard three years ago and now you’re like, “listen, I want my A choice on the TV set.”’ But it’s – it’s just one of those things that really, uh, really matters to me. And I’ve been offered stylists and stuff in the past, um, quite recently. Every now and again I’ll get an email from somebody. And, you know, they’re always very good. The stylists that work for people that we know. Really good people.

But my only issue with having a stylist is, ah, it takes away all the fun, you know? You know, the – the good points of wearing

clothing and the bad points. We've all worn stuff on TV and we've looked back on it and we've gone, 'Jesus, what the hell was I thinking? Why didn't anybody – what – why would I do that? I look like an absolute idiot. That doesn't even fit me properly. What am I doing?' We've all done that. And I kind of enjoy that. And I think as good as stylists are, I – I think for myself personally that, uh, it just takes away – it just takes away all that – that fun. I still like – I still like the, um, the misses as much as the hits.

But I have suggested stylists for people in the past. Um, an ex-girlfriend of mine, she – she was – she always felt like she wasn't – just wasn't that stylish compared to me. And I didn't really care. Because I always felt like she was stylish. And, um, so she got, um, she got a stylist. I said – I said to her, I said, 'try and get a stylist. You don't need one all the time, but if you just pay for, you know, a consultation with them, maybe you'll figure out some new looks for yourself and it'll bring out some confidence in you.'

And she did it and she loved it. And she got – she's got so many different, um, you know, looks now. And she feels more confident about wearing certain types of clothing, in particular stripes. She would never really wear like a striped dress and stuff. And, um, anybody who's – who has any sort of reservations about their own fashion, I would definitely suggest going – just booking a consultation with a stylist. Because it – it could change your life and it could help with your happiness. But, um, from myself, especially at this level right now, I really enjoy it. And if somebody else is pretty much picking my clothes for me then, I mean, that's – half the fun's gone.

KIRI: Yeah. It feels like your approach to it – I've got two things to say. Um, that your approach to picking clothes, which is exactly how I feel, and when I was speaking to Lolly Adefope, she had the

same thing as well, is so much like your – I think why people go into stand-up and not acting. Because in stand-up you're on your own, which means the victories are all yours. The failures are all yours, but when you get it right it's all – you don't have to share it with anyone. Whereas like improv people and people in plays, it's like, 'we're a team, we work together.' And stand-up's like, 'no no, I'm on my own. Like I want all the glory.'

DARREN: Exactly.

KIRI: And it's the same, what you're saying. Not working with a stylist, like it's all you. And yes, you might fall sometimes, but every time you get it right, that is a victory that's just yours.

DARREN: Yeah, yeah, exactly that. I want all the glory. [laughs]

KIRI: And I know what you mean about television. That I don't actually think it sounds too insane. Because if people listening to this who haven't done stuff like that, like the – the sort of – I – reticent to use the word, but obsession. I'm exactly the same. My first thing is, 'can I – can I go into wardrobe?' And I – I go, 'this is my first choice and I'd like to wear this.' Because I'll pick – my makeup matches my outfits. Like my eye shadow will always match – well, you probably can't see it on television.

DARREN: Oh yeah.

KIRI: But it informs everything else. And the reason why I'm so sort of keen on it, to have that conversation and get it sorted, is because when you're doing television, it's – one of the things that you know you can control is how you look. So, you know, you might be – especially when it's like a show where you turn up and – and play games and stuff. You – you can't really tell how the rest

of that's going to go, um, but you can know, 'oh, well at least I'm going to look nice and I'll be able to watch it back and not hate myself.'

So it's just a – a level of control in an uncontrollable situation as well. Especially with feedback from like, you know, people at home. Unsolicited, you know, advice or comments from people on Twitter or whatever. If someone lays into your outfit and you – it was your first choice and you're really happy with it, you'd be like, 'fuck you, you don't know what you're on about.' Whereas if it was the second one and you felt a bit uncomfortable, you'd be like, 'do you know what? They were right.'

DARREN: Yeah. I've had a few of those. I – I've had a few of those where they go, 'what are you – what were you thinking?' And because it's your first choice, you're like, 'I don't care what you think. I love this outfit. Oh, yeah.' You're right. It's the one thing that you can – you can really control, you know? You can't control, um, you can't control the edit, you – you know? You don't know what bits of yours is going to make it and how you're going to come across. But you can control how you look, man.

And, um, it's something that's really stuck with me. And also, you know, in showbiz, we have to admit, it's pretty shallow at the best of times. And these things matter. You can be the funniest person going. The – but if you don't have a look – and it doesn't have – necessarily have to be the best look, but just a look that – that works, then, um, it will hold you back, you know? Everybody who is really making it has some form of a, uh, a strong look, you know?

And it – they – you know, and I mentioned like Tom Allen again. Tom just wears suits. That's Tom's thing. He just wears suits. He's

the only one who wears those kind of suits on absolutely everything he does, right? Very strong look. You know – and, you know, I always got quite – quite jealous of, um, Tom. And say like a Jimmy Carr as well. Because if you see them outside of their suits, it – they – I feel like they could do anything they like. If they don't wear a suit, nobody would recognise them.

KIRI: Yeah. Nobody, yeah.

DARREN: Like you know what I mean?

KIRI: Yeah.

DARREN: Like if – like if Tom Allen's wearing a hoodie and a cap, no one is recognising Tom Allen on the streets. Nobody is. But because his look is so defined on TV, it's, um, it's great. I would never – I don't think I'll ever have that kind of, um, sort of strong, defined look. Like – like as in like, 'he's the guy who just wears a shirt all the time. He's the guy who wears a suit.' Because I like experimenting so much.

And my agent gets so pissed off about it. Like that's the one thing he will say to me. He goes, 'Darren,' like he'll go, 'Darren, for god's sake, just pick a look.' Because he – because in his – in his head, he wants to market me as 'the guy with no facial hair.' And I'm like, 'oh, I made a video with a handlebar moustache the other week. Sorry. I'm – I'm doing a handlebar moustache. But don't worry. When I do this next show, I'm – I've got a moustache. Not a handlebar –' and it's – it just does his head in. But I'm like – I enjoy – I enjoy being able to – to mess around and, uh, and play with my look.

It's – I think it's just really exciting. And there will be a time, maybe, when, you know, I'll – I'll calm down with it a little bit more and – and, you know, probably experiment less. But I really enjoy it. And I think that it's, um, it's something – it's a characteristic of mine that I – I really like. You know, as well as being, you know, funny and engaging and all that sort of stuff. But I feel like there's lots of people who do that. There's loads of us and we're very funny, engaging people. But I think your look is – is unique. And you as somebody who had a look very strong, especially with the hair, very early on. And you really nailed that in. Which is a great look because who else has got that?

KIRI: Yeah, and the reason I got it is because I thought I had nothing that stood out about me doing comedy. And I was like – because I – people always used to go, 'what's your stuff about?' And I couldn't be like – or I'd be like, 'oh, well I'm – I sort of talked about my boyfriend a bit, and family, and – and I'm from Wales.' It – I didn't – would get stuck into stuff.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: I had no like, 'oh, they're the one like who talks about X.' So I was like, 'okay, well I'll make my – the way I look, oh, the one with the big white stripe and the sequins is like – well that's no one else, is it?' And it was because it came from – I guess an insecurity with my comedy. And now I don't feel insecure with my comedy. I would know how to describe it. But then the look, weirdly, I get people on my talk shows who turn up dressed in sequins. It's like a part of the thing. It's great.

DARREN: That's awesome.

KIRI: It's so great.

DARREN: That's wicked. I never thought of that. Yeah, that's really cool. Wow, that's a level that I never – it would be great if I just had people turn up with just a handlebar moustache. I'm like – they would be so annoyed as well because I probably would've shaved it off by then. I'd be like, 'guys, I'm not – I'm not doing that look today. Sorry.'

KIRI: Are there any trends over the years that you've – you've not managed to pull off? That you're like, 'why did I bother with that?'

DARREN: Hold on, let me think. Uh, do you have any?

KIRI: Okay, well I can't wear – because of the old big knockers, I can't wear anything that's like too strappy or like halter necks.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: Because I can't go braless either. It's too much for everyone.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: I got proper like – they're not – I haven't got like tits or even boobs, I've got like milkers, do you know what I mean?

DARREN: Milkers!

KIRI: Like big like sort of like nursemaid heavy tits. So like I can't have anything – it's not sort of like, 'ooh, a cheeky right nipple through some satin.'

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: It's like, 'fucking hell, how heavy are those tits?' So I can't do anything without a bra.

DARREN: Yeah, I – I've never been much of a vest guy in general, other than when I go to bed.

KIRI: But you're so built.

DARREN: Never been into it. Never worn a vest on the street. I can't – nah. Maybe at the gym sometimes when I'm really hot, but uh, yeah, I've just never been much of a like a body show-off guy. Maybe because I'm so insecure. I've never been into anything that's like vaguely kind of showy-offy. Like I've never been much of a shorts guy. Uh, even though I did say this summer that I want to start wearing more shorts. Uh, because it should be really hot. But, um, anything – anything too like – like remember, uh, remember the old – the old deep v shirts?

KIRI: Yes, I do. [laughs]

DARREN: Like the deep v t-shirts that were that – oh. Now I did get some of them.

KIRI: The metrosexual sort of All Saints waxed chest job, yeah?

DARREN: Ugh, problem was I was never thin enough for it and it just sort of like – I just had these like boy tits. My little boy tits would be sticking out. You just look awful. It just never worked for me, doing all of those. And, uh, I remember everybody used to wear them in Birmingham back when I was like – I used to do a lot of promoting. And it was like – you'd get like in a pack of threes and it was just – lads would wear them. They would wear the deep v – it'd usually be black or white, really thin, really wide

boot-cut jeans that were ripped, and freaking horrible brown flat shoes.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Yes, so awful.

DARREN: It was gross. I think that visual just put me off those t-shirts for life. But yeah, I couldn't – I couldn't pull them off at all.

KIRI: I – when I think of you as well, like on our time together – well we've known each other a long time and then we worked on the Comedy Bus together, but I – I know that you love your clothes and you spend a lot on clothes and you get stuff – new stuff all the time. Are you – how much do you think about it in terms of like the impact on the environment? Like does it – does it enter your head? Or – or is it like – you know, does it – is it something you consider now? And – and has it changed your shopping habits at all?

DARREN: Kiri, I'm going for a classic case of, 'I'm now middle class.' And – and I think about my footprint in terms of my clothing and my spending so much more now than I – than I used to. Uh, I'm not big into – here's the thing. We all know fast fashion isn't great for the planet, right? Well I – I'm more aware of this now. Fast fashion isn't great, but especially for like a lot of my family, fast fashion was generally what they can afford. But I'm also aware that, um, really fancy designer brands are also bad for the planet. Like they're – and they're a, you know, they're a lot more money and a lot of those people – a lot of those designer brands people, they're not good people.

KIRI: No.

DARREN: Like they have some of the worst views going ever. It's – it's amazing, these people. So I'm – I try my best, as much as I like fashion, I try my best now. I try and buy more sustainable stuff. Um, a lot of it that I'm finding can be quite expensive for the – because a lot of the other – a lot of the brands that I really like are trying to do more sustainable stuff, so better for the planet and all that sort of stuff. And I'm trying to buy more of that, but I'm also shopping in a lot more vintage stores now. Um, I've got a really nice one on my road so I'm shopping up there. I'm also buying just a lot less now. I've – I've sort of – put that on my – but I've got –

KIRI: Really? Because I think you were almost addicted. When we were making the Comedy Bus it was quite hard because we were travelling from like town to town and we'd be doing different things different days. And both you and I would have like Asos orders waiting at our like hotels. And I remember you saying – you were like, 'oh, I've ordered a load of stuff, I can't wait to get back to my flat.' And then you were like, 'do you know what? Sometimes I don't even get around to opening it.' And even then, before I was really aware of stuff, I was like, 'that's fucking bad, Darren.'

DARREN: I mean, Kiri, if I could put my laptop up and show you all of the bags of clothing that are unopened still, it's a problem. It's – I'm – honestly it's embarrassing. And I think I do – and trainers. Don't even get me started on trainers. If I've got – let's just say I've got 30 pairs of trainers and shoes. I've maybe worn in total 12. Like out of the lot. It's a complete problem. I am – honestly I have been thinking about this for a while, that I'm going to either, uh, give some away to people, probably give some to charity, uh, sell some.

But, um, I think I've got enough clothes. I did buy some stuff, uh, on, uh, on the show that I was just filming, but a lot of it was from vintage stores and charity shops because they have really nice shirts that I really enjoyed. But I am making a – a conscious effort to try and stop spending.

Because I just know that I – I don't get through all of this stuff. If I could get through it, that's my number one – my number one thing is spending all this money and I'm not – I'm not really wearing it. I mean I've got stuff – I mean I moved house two years ago. I've got stuff I moved from my old place to another place that I've still not worn. Like it's – it's gone through – it wouldn't surprise me if I've got an item that has been with me since I was back in the Black Country. Living. It – and I've just brought it with me and I still haven't managed to put it on. It wouldn't surprise me.

I – I'm starting to think I've got a slight problem with opening new stuff. Because like I see – okay, we're getting real deep now. I see people – like my friend. My friend, I'll go with my friend to go pick up some trainers, and he will go pick up some trainers, brand new trainers, exclusive trainers, whatever. And he will put them on and just wear them. He'll go, 'oh, I'll just wear them now.' And to me that is crazy. I mean to me you might as well grab those trainers and just cover them in gravy. Like it's just – it makes no sense.

I've never done that in my life. I've never ever bought something from a shop and put it on immediately. I have to take it home, it has to stay in a – a cubby hole for about a year, and then I'll bring it out. And I think that's what my problem is. So I've got enough clothes for the next, uh, few years without having to buy anything. I don't need to buy anything. I overspent on shops like

Asos and all these sorts of places. And, um, I do feel like – so I was buying something at least like every week. Something would get bought at least, without fail.

And, um, now I've definitely, definitely cut down on it all. I – I can definitely do more – I've got more restraint now. I'm much more, uh, restrained on what I'm spending because, uh, I want to move out of here and I want to get my own house. So I'm just slowly saving money. Because I know it all adds up. It all really adds up over, um, over the – over the months and the years. So, um, I'm definitely trying to – trying to stop buying stuff.

And when I get, you know, because it's the same with all – with, you know, we've got different types of clothing, you know? You've got your clothing that you wear – you generally wear to a gig. That sort of stuff. You've got your stuff that you would wear probably to like a family thing, which is always different to what you would wear to a gig normally. And then you've got your stuff that you can wear on TV, because TV, stripes and all that sort of nonsense is – is generally different to what you'd wear for those two, and then hanging out.

So I've got different types of clothing for stuff. The branded stuff is obviously stuff that I would wear at a gig or with mates or something. And then you've got the TV stuff, which is growing as well. And, um, that's kind of how I used to justify it. But now I definitely – okay, so – okay, in my defence, I bought two ponchos, right? I really like these ponchos, and they're made out of wool. I bought two wool ponchos because I thought – it was on sale and I was like, 'they're going to look great in the autumn/ winter.' And I got them now.

But apart from that, I haven't bought anything for at least about three weeks. Oh, I did buy some stuff from a vintage shop, but I was actually there. And it was a vintage shop as well. But I – I am definitely trying. Because, um, I think I will – I'll let you know when I eventually decide to just go through all of my stuff and just decide whether I'm going to give it away, sell it, or actually wear it. Because it is taking up a lot – there is a lot of space. I mean I bought a bigger house for more room, and I'm already like, 'I need more room.' And it's only because of – it's only because of clothes. That's it. There's nothing else I really buy. It's just sort of clothes and trainers.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: It's good you're buying vintage, though. And I know you've always had an eye on vintage. But is there anything that you've like – an item of clothing that you have held on for years and years that you still love?

DARREN: So I really like baseball jerseys. So I've got quite a few. I've probably got about 15 of them. It's one of the only things that I will actively look for on Ebay to get the most vintage ones. Because I just like – I just like old ones. I just like the ones that are really old. And you get them for 20 quid. I'm also going through a very strange cycling jersey phase, which is the weirdest thing. You know what it is about cycling jerseys? I saw a guy wearing one and I didn't know they had pockets on the back. So on the back of cycling jerseys they've got deep pockets. And I tell you, in my head that's all I needed. I was like – so I've got – so – and they're all cheap. They – again it's Ebay, so they're all like £10, like a cycling jersey. So I've got a few of them.

A lot of the stuff, if I really really really really like it, I will end up like wearing it. And once I break something – it takes me ages. It could take me years to wear something. Once I wear it once, that is it, man. That is like – it's game over. Same with trainers, man. I had a really nice pair of trainers and I was like, 'oh, these are only for special occasions.' And I started wearing them more and more. And the next thing you know like they're football trainers all of a sudden. It's just that. That's what happens with me. There's no in between. It's either like you don't wear it at all, or when you start wearing it, I really love it.

KIRI: Is there a time in history, like in any that you – you would love to live in just for the fashion?

DARREN: I'd go 90s Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. That sort of like Will Smithy, like old-school, uh, fat trainers and the denims and the really, um, Aztecy coloured tops and stuff like that. That's probably – yeah, I'd probably say then, or – yeah, but I also think that – I also think the 60s had a really good – when I think 60s, I think like Beatles 60s. Like I don't – I really like the suits back then. I like the cut of them. Um, and I think – I think the fact – and the hairstyles were really good. But, uh, yeah, my – probably my favourite's probably 90s, I'd say.

KIRI: Yeah, 90s. That era, that – like you say, that Fresh Prince, the – the prints were great and like – yeah. I also think of like Diana post-divorce. You know, like little cycling shorts and like an oversized – all that looks absolutely great. It's a really strong look.

DARREN: Yeah, and a little jumper as well. Yeah. Yeah. And then I think of like Clueless and all that. I really like the colours. I just like their use of denim back then as well. Because it was always like a really light denim and they had loads of overalls and yeah,

everything was kind of like, you know, nowadays they – nowadays – I think 90s is probably the most sort of copied nowadays, really. That style of fashion. Because everything is like, you know, oversized fit and loose, and it's all from the 90s. And, um, the big, thick socks. And the shell stuff. The shell jackets and like the shell tracksuits I always thought looked really good in the 90s. Yeah.

KIRI: I was in a charity shop the other day with my partner and, um, there was a – like a vintage ski suit from like the late 80s, early 90s. You know, so like full shell suit. And it was a size 12 and I was like, 'not even on a good day, babes.' But like I – I was like really, really weighing it up, whether I could like, you know, 'well maybe if I have like the shits for two weeks I'll fit in this.' And I was like –

DARREN: Kiri, we are so alike. I saw a ski suit on Asos and I went, 'oh.' I'm not going to buy it. I'm not going to – I'm not going to buy a ski suit on Asos, but I thought to myself, 'I'm on the lookout for a ski suit.' Because I saw it and I love the colours. It was exactly that. It was – it was like – it was predominantly black but all the sides were pink with like these little do on. And it was – it just looked so cool to me. And I went, 'why have I never been interested in ski suits before until now?' But yeah yeah yeah. If I saw one in a vintage shop, I – yeah, I'm giving it a good go, definitely.

KIRI: Yeah, it was both me and my partner standing there working out if either of us could fit in it. But he's so tall it would be like – it would finish just below the knee.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: And it's not as cool then.

DARREN: Oh, ugh.

KIRI: And what item of clothing have you got – is – I mean, is there one with you because of your turnover? That you just put on and you just instantly feel great in?

DARREN: Probably – is it here? Uh –

KIRI: Is it your gorgeous leather jacket with the fringing?

DARREN: That's the one!

KIRI: Oh my god, what a good guess.

DARREN: That's the one, yeah. Yeah.

KIRI: Because that is like gorgeous.

DARREN: I put it on and I'm like, 'oh, hello, showbiz is here. Who's this fun guy walking into the room? Hello.' Yeah, I just love it and it's – I quite like it because it's just black but there's no – it's not like it's red or like pink or anything that's really in your face. I've seen a few white ones. It's just black. It's very understated. But then, 'hello, what's going on with this under the arms?' I think it's great. And, uh, I've got like a – I've got a hat. I've got like a, um, like a fedora type hat that really goes with it as well.

No, no, yeah, it's – I put it on and I just – I just feel great in it. Because it's just – it's some – I – I also know that it's something that I would never have worn like ten years ago. I would never have felt comfortable in it, uh, ten years ago. But – but now, yeah. It's definitely one of my faves. It will take me years – I mean it

would take me so long for that jacket to become worn out and – like if you can ask me in ten years' time, 'Darren, how's the leather jacket with the – the fringes, like tassels on?' I'll be like, 'it's in perfect nick.' Like it's going to take me ages to wear that down. My – my grandkids could probably wear that one. I love it so much. Yeah.

KIRI: Years ago there used to be a vintage shop on the same road as the Frog and Bucket in Manchester and it was called the £3 shop because everything there was three quid.

DARREN: Oh, great.

KIRI: And don't get me wrong, there was some absolute shit. But there were some gems in there. And one of the things I got that is – one of those things that I'm like, 'I don't know when to wear you,' is a – a vintage 1980s cropped white like pleather jacket with fringing on it. And it is so cool but I'm like, 'I just don't know when I would wear you,' do you know what I mean? Like, 'I can't – I wouldn't nip to the shops in you. I wouldn't wear you on telly.'

DARREN: No.

KIRI: 'I wouldn't wear you at gigs,' so I'm like – do you know what I mean? Like one day it'll have its time to shine and I'll be like, 'this is the best three quid I've ever spent.' But until then it's just sat there waiting, moving around different parts of my wardrobe. I've had it – I've honestly had it since I was about probably 24. So it's like for ten years of my life.

DARREN: Wow.

KIRI: And I've yet to wear it. But one day I know it'll come through for me.

DARREN: I like that. I like that optimism. Like, 'one day it's going to happen. It's going to happen. It's been ten years.' I mean I'm no one to talk. I'm pretty sure I've got items from ten years that I'm like, 'I'm going to give you to – I've –' I don't know about you, but because I yo-yo so much in my weight, I've got so much clothes that I'm like, 'oh, I've got to lose at least two stone to get back into that. But not going to give it away, because I'll be back and I will wear that at some point.' I mean I'm constantly doing that with clothing.

KIRI: Yeah. No, I have the same thing. And I had this conversation with Lolly as well, of that thing of like – I'm not so bad as in like I don't keep stuff for like thinspiration, that this is – this is my ideal size. It's more just like, 'I'm not ready for this to be out of my life yet. I feel like there's an occasion this might come up.'

DARREN: Exactly. It's never ever a thinspiration type thing. If I wanted to do a thinspiration I'd just put a picture of me naked on my fridge or something like that. Like it's nothing to do with that. It's just that I really like this, it doesn't fit me right now, I'll be back into it at some point. I can't give it away because I love it so much, and we'll be reunited at some point. Maybe not this year, maybe not next year, but I'm going to get at least another wear out of you before I give you away, that's for sure.

KIRI: Is there, um, that's so funny. Your relationship with shopping, then. We have talked about a little bit.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: But I mean, I think you're a – I know you buy lots of stuff online, but I – I seem to feel like you like actually being in a shop as well and touching things and – and trying stuff on and knowing the fit. Like have you got a preference with that?

DARREN: Love being in a shop. Yeah yeah yeah. I – I'm really into online shopping. I have a lot of shops that I enjoy looking at. You know, I'm sure you're probably the same. You get emails every day from wherever you – and they go, 'doo,' and you're like, 'okay, let's do this, let's have a look.' Sale, you know, all that sort of stuff. Um, but, um, no. Nothing better than, uh, a shop for me. Um, I was supposed to go, um, shopping tomorrow to go – because I haven't done – I haven't been to a shop in, you know, since December or whenever it was.

So I might just do a bit of shopping, um, but I like going in. I like trying things on. I like to get, you know, if I can get a basket, fill a basket or a trolley with clothes and just go, 'right, I'm going to be in here for, you know, 15, 20 minutes or whatever it's going to take.' Um, yeah, much prefer being in a shop. I mean there's nothing better than sort of going somewhere and – I mean you must get this a lot, especially with charity shops and vintage shops and stuff where, um, you know, you've got your heart set on something and then you just leave with something completely different that you just love. That you – you're just so glad – you just know for a fact that you would never have found this online.

So, um, I'm really – I'm really getting into that now a lot more, especially with, uh, charity shops, um, places like that. I couldn't love – I find it strange when people hate like in-person shopping. Like I just don't get – I think I've got much more confidence now.

In-person shoe shopping, trainer shopping, is horrendous because I've got giant feet. So it's never been fun. So I walk in and I go, 'I'm a size 13,' and they look at me as if I've just said, 'I'm going to kill your mum.' And I don't – because they – like 16, 17 year old shop assistants, they just don't know how to lie in their face. So I'm like, 'do you have this in a 16?' They're like, 'ugh.' I'm like, 'okay, alright.' Hate it. Hate shoe shopping.

KIRI: Yeah, but Darren – what you're describing there and being like, 'I don't understand why people like don't enjoy shopping.' And then you're like, 'oh, but shoe shopping because I don't fit into anything.' It's like you've just – you've just explained why loads of people hate shopping. It's because nothing fits them in the shop, mate.

DARREN: But I always feel like – I always feel like you can definitely get big sizes in a lot of shops. Like I knew for a fact that when I was at my – especially at my heaviest, I could not go to Topman or any of those shops. And I'd be like, 'fine, that's not for me. I know H&M.' But I feel like when you're a size 13, there is – there is no shop that says, 'we do size 13s.' So even like the popular sports shops like your – your Foot Lockers and your Sports Directs and your JDs, they don't say they do 13s.

You just have to go in there and then get whatever shoe you like and like hope, hope. You're not even hoping that they have a 13. You're hoping that the sales assistant can be assed to go into the stock room and look. 90% of the time they just go, 'uh, we don't have one in a 13.' I'm like, 'can you at least look for me?'

But luckily online is way better for me with, uh, with shoes and trainers. So I have no – I never go shopping generally for, um, for shoes. But I – but because my size is just such a pain, if I do for

whatever reason find a shop that has a – some shoes that I like in a 13, I will 100% buy it always. I always just feel like I am in luck. I got to buy this right now.

KIRI: But everything you were saying, by the way, about shopping, is exactly the reverse of what like – I'm really lucky I can shop in most sizes – in most shops they'll have my size. But how generally like fat women feel about shopping. It's like – it's the reverse, because they're like, 'I go in a shop, they won't have my size, but they will have shoes that fit.' Which is why fat girls always have great shoes, great accessories. Because it's one of the things that they can't make that's too small. Yeah, it's so funny to hear you talk – have the exact opposite experience to basically a fat woman.

[Both laugh]

DARREN: Yeah. Yeah, it must be quite the – the mess, especially if you're a big girl. Because just, you know, especially with, uh, sizes of women that I know, they always – they always say, 'oh, Topshop, they do – I'm more of a 14 in a Topshop. But when I go to this shop, I'm more of a 12. Because their stuff's just bigger.' And I'm like, 'how do you shop online? How do you not just go into shops and try things on?' Because that would be a nightmare. At least, you know, especially for men, we generally know what large or XL in a top is to, you know, a 34/32 leg or whatever. It's always generally the same. Now obviously the fit's different, but it's – it's always the same. Whereas it just seems so varied with women's sizes on everything.

KIRI: It's a wild west. And I'm like – so I'm – when I'm fatter in the winter, I'm like a 14, 16. Sometimes like a solid 16. And then I usually lose weight in the summer, and I'll be more a 14. But like I

bought this jumpsuit the other day from Adidas, which is like a leopard print jumpsuit, um, it's so good. And it was –

DARREN: Pretty sure I've – I've seen that one.

KIRI: Yeah, it's good. And – yeah.

DARREN: Is it – is it the black one or is it the leopard print – print one?

KIRI: It's the leopard print one, yeah. The leopard print one.

DARREN: Yeah. Yeah, I saw that one and I went, 'oh, that would look great.' Oh, you've got that? Awesome.

KIRI: Yeah, and I – I saw – someone I knew had it first. And I was like, 'oh, what's it like?' And she was like, 'oh yeah, great. I've had to go up a size, though.' And I was like, 'okay, good.' And I went on it and they only go up to a 16. So I was like, 'well, I'd better hope that I'm on my way back down from a 16.' Because it's actually going to go on like a size 14. So it's just – and I'm like on the – I'm fat but I'm on the tinier, tinier side of fat. That you know, if you're sort of like a size 32 or something like that, I mean just shops won't have anything for you. Like they won't. You'd have to do all online and then hope that it looks like the picture when it gets there. It's just so difficult I think.

DARREN: Yeah. Yeah, because normally as well the models are never like a size 16, are they?

KIRI: Exactly.

DARREN: You're buying it in a 16 but the model's like an eight or a ten. And it's very different. Yeah. That's very – that's very annoying.

KIRI: Yeah, yeah. Um, what about then, you're talking about charity shops and vintage shops. What's the best thing you've ever thrifted or got secondhand? What's your like, 'oh, this was a bargain?' Or, 'I love this, I can't get it anywhere else.'

DARREN: So literally on my road there's a, um, a – sorry, where I live, if I just walk like two minutes, there's a Traid. One of those Traid places. And, uh, oh man, if you're a woman you are laughing in there. They've got so much women's stuff. And the men's section is like just like a little corner. But it's a – it's a damn good corner. Like they've really got the best of the best. Um, I picked this – I picked this really nice sort of blue shirt on it, and it's got like – it's got like Egyptian like pharaohs on but in cartoon.

KIRI: Wow.

DARREN: And it was like – it was like ten – £10. It was ten for three and I picked another button-up, um, like a baseball cardy and a hat. And it was three for a tenner. And I was just – and the shirt, I – like I love the shirt. I think the shirt's great. And, um, yeah. I just need to do – I just need to do more of that. I need to do more sort of looking and – and thrifting.

Because the good thing is with those sort of stores, I've got TKMaxx energy. Because obviously I'm a TKMaxx boy. So I'm very used to going, 'okay, let's settle the evening. Let's keep myself free. This is going to be a while.' So like I've got that kind of energy. Can I just say as well, I'm the, um, so I've just been filming this show called, uh, British as Folk. Me, Ivo Graham, Fern Brady,

as you know. And, uh, we were in Leicester. And Ivo has never been to TKMaxx. He – he didn't know what it was.

KIRI: What?

DARREN: So I've brought Ivo to TXMaxx. He bought a lot of stuff. Then the other day he phones me. He goes, 'guess where I am?' He's back in TKMaxx. He's wearing trainers and a – he loves TKMaxx now. He's never been –

KIRI: Of course he does, it's the best place in the world.

DARREN: It's the best place in the world. He says to me, he goes, 'Darren, uh, my – my, uh, fashion, uh, inspiration and influences from my life have been my mum and dad, um, my – my, uh, girlfriend, and now you.' It's – I'm like, 'how have you never been to TKMaxx?' It's just, yeah. It's the best store ever.

KIRI: It's so good.

DARREN: The – the best part – the best part about sending a newbie into TKMaxx was they find something that they like and they go, 'oh, I really like this.' And then they look at the price and we go, 'uh uh, that's not the price. Look at the other tag.' And it's like, 'oh, wicked.'

[Both laugh]

DARREN: It is so good, man. I love everything about TKMaxx. Like I love the clothes, I buy the candles, I buy the homeware. I – everything in there is – is just for me. It's – it's brilliant. I love it.

KIRI: Yeah, it is, uh, yeah. The homeware. I absolutely get wide for the homeware section now. I never used to be bothered about it, and now I'm like, 'homeware, yes please.'

DARREN: Same here.

KIRI: Like I'll – 'let me smell a big candle with a wooden lid. Mm, yes please.'

DARREN: I've got a few – I've got a few here.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Do you think you've nailed your style now with your like strong lines, strong colours, strong prints? Or do you think, 'oh, I can see this evolving again?' And you'll be in like – leisurewear, you know, like Elton John? Like in very like expensive Gucci tracksuits as you get older?

DARREN: Elton John's leisurewear look is hilarious to me. That's so funny you brought it up because I remember seeing him going, 'why does he look like he's going for a jog but he's not going for a jog?' Like what is – yeah, that's hilarious. Um, no, I definitely – I definitely haven't found my, uh, my style. I feel like it's very experimental still. I haven't found that thing. Um, I'm – I'm slowly considering – I say 'slowly considering' it's like a big deal. But I am, uh, considering suit-type-based-type clothing a little bit.

I am considering it. It's not a definite. Um, I just think – I just think – and it's a bit arrogant. It's more just me going, 'can I just wear a suit and just like mix it up a little bit?' Because I feel like everybody else's suits are kind of – you know, like, uh, Joel wears nice suits for, uh, The Masked Singer and whatnot. But not even

like that. Like take it away a bit and maybe do different colours. So maybe like, you know, does my suit trousers necessarily have to match my suit jacket? But without it looking like a, you know, a supply teacher, you know? Or – and I – I don't really – I'm not big into ties, so can I wear bolo ties with it? Can I mix it up that way?

Um, I am considering it. Because that is one thing I've never worn on telly, ever. Is anything vaguely a suit. Also I've never performed in a suit onstage, uh, or anything that looks like a suit. Um, so I am considering it. Maybe. Probably when I go have a – you know, seasonal weight comes off and I get a bit thinner in the summer. Um, and I'll just see how I feel about that then because I do, you know, I do like suits and I do like suit jackets. And I – I think it's a good look, but it is also – it also changes, um, you know, your status onstage a little bit, I think.

So, you know, I kind of dress a bit like, you know, 'hey, I'm just kind of like a mate or something.' Whereas if I start wearing anything vaguely like a suit jacket, you – it's a bit more authoritative, isn't it? And it changes how you look and, um, but yeah. That's probably the only thing that I can think of that, uh, I – I could see myself doing a bit more in the – in the years to come, is wearing a bit – but not like – not like really basic, boring suits. Because I like – you know, like a Burton type suit. Um, just something with a bit more about it. A bit – you know like the sort of suits that you see people wear at, um, the Met Gala and all that sort of stuff?

KIRI: Yeah, totally.

DARREN: Like just something with a little bit more flair about it and a bit more style about it.

KIRI: Yeah, a bit of design. You know sometimes they'll have like no lapels or they'll have an asymmetric cut. Or just things that's like playing with the form. I think that's great.

DARREN: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah. Exactly. Stuff like that I think is – would be quite new for, uh, to – especially to wear on TV. In this country I still think we're, you know, except for like the – the drag scene, I still think like it's quite – it's pretty boring and a bit basic everywhere. And, um, you know, and then that's why – that's why I always find it hilarious whenever there's like a drag star on a show just with full of like dad dresses. It's just so – it's just so funny to me because they always just look like the most boring people there in comparison. And I quite – I – you know, that's –

KIRI: It's because they are.

DARREN: They normally are the most boring people there, yeah. So I feel like just a bit more colour and a bit more flair maybe, uh, to come out. And then yeah, I think yeah, definitely more suit-based, uh, outfits for the – for years to come, I think.

KIRI: Love it. Is there an item of clothing you can always see yourself wearing? Can you see yourself 70 years of age with a – with your fringed leather jacket? Going to do the big shop in your Waitrose?

DARREN: I – if I could wear that to do my big shop in the Waitrose, I've come a long way. That's when I'm just – that – if that is my going to the Waitrose jacket, what is my, 'I have arrived, this is me,' clothing? It must – and it's like a spaceman outfit or something. I don't necessarily think I'm that on like fashion. Like I wouldn't know what is really in. It's just kind of – I think it's just more what I like. I mean I pay attention to it but I'm not like, 'ooh,

I need to get, you know, uh, these types of sunglasses because everybody's got sunglasses.' Ooh, maybe sunglasses. I've never worn sunglasses before.

KIRI: Oh, Darren. Trust me, don't start. Because it's a slippery – because they are such an affordable outfit-making like accessory. Don't – if you – if you can keep – it's like if people don't drink coffee, I'm like, 'don't start drinking coffee.' Because you'll just become dependent on it. And it's the same with sunglasses.

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: Sunglasses are so affordable and fun and the stuff that you can have now, they are – oh, don't – don't go near it, Darren.

DARREN: Even on the show that we were just filming, I have a friend that has sunglasses. I've never had sunglasses. And it's – it's rare because sometimes you see people with something and then you get the urge to get it as well. But with sunglasses, for some – I've just never had the urge to get sort of a pair of sunglasses at all. And I – yeah, you might be right. That might just be a – a rabbit hole that I just do not need to go down right now at all.

KIRI: I can see you in some little like – almost like 90s like Jack Nicolson sort of – you know, like that loads of those celebrities wore at like premieres. I think like Wesley Snipes wore them as well.

DARREN: Yeah. Yeah. Those tiny ones, yeah. Yeah.

KIRI: Those tiny little ones. I can see you in something like that.

DARREN: I – yeah, I think – because you have to go and find out what fits your face, don't you? Normally, with sun – I don't think most people do that. I think they just go with what they think works, which is also fine. But I'd be very interested – nah, I was going to say I'd be very interested to go and just say, 'hey, what type of sunglasses do you think fits my sort of face?' And then go from there. But I feel like it's just a downward spiral. Uh, maybe in years to come I will start wearing sunglasses for some reason.

KIRI: Exactly. I'm excited to see.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Are there any trends that you're hoping never come back?

DARREN: I really hated like – remember the jeans with the – the thingy on the back of the ass? Do you remember like the Van Dutch style jeans with like the writing over – so there was a point where jeans used to have loads of writing on the crotch and on the ass. Like I remember women would wear the Juicy stuff on the ass and all that. It just – ugh, those weird velour tracksuits. It was awful.

KIRI: Yeah, with 'angel' on the butt. But like whenever – I think I tried to ironically wear them, but like my ass is so big it just like ate the middle letter.

[Both laugh]

DARREN: Yeah, them. Did you ever remember – it was just called Ecko Unlimited, the rhino brand? I used to love those t-shirts. I used to wear – and, uh, Ed Hardy. Oh my gosh, Ed Hardy. Ed

Hardy was one of the worst. Ugh, he's a tattoo artist who made clothes. No wonder they looked like that. They were, ugh.

And, uh, pink Timberlands. I remember those. They just weren't good. The pink – they used to have pink velour ones that – I used to work in JD Sports. And I just remember everybody who – I remember there was fights for them in the shop, uh, because – because they had like one size five. I remember one time I was – when I was working there, they had a size five and it was the, uh, it was the – the last one was on, um, on the shop floor. So whoever picked it up and said, 'uh,' we'd go, 'oh, we've only got that one.' And then these two other girls came in for it and they were fighting in the shop for the last size five pink Timberlands. I just remember that. Yeah. Um, ooh. Remember, um, giant belts around dresses?

KIRI: Yes, I do remember those. Yeah.

DARREN: The giant – I'm sure you did that as well.

KIRI: Yeah.

DARREN: Yeah, yeah, the really thick, wide belts. Yeah, yeah. Such a – such a hilarious look. Again, it was all early noughties. Just all really fun. And, um, I also hated those giant scarves that we would wear, whatever they were called. Remember them?

KIRI: Oh yeah, they were like Palestinian style scarves, right? Yeah.

DARREN: Palestinian style scarves. Yeah, you'd see comics wearing them just sweat – and they would just wipe their forehead when they were laughing. Just sweating in them.

KIRI: I also hate those massive, um, wrap belts that were like a big round pleather disc with holes round the side. And like loads – and everyone looked like they were in like the WWE. They were awful.

DARREN: Yeah, yeah. You looked like a world championship wrestler. Yeah.

KIRI: Okay, final question, Darren. Um, very sad day. Uh, you've passed away. It's your funeral. What do you wear to be buried in?

DARREN: Oh, I was talking about this with someone the other day. I said, 'why is it when everyone dies they're always dressed in stuff that they would never wear in real life?' Like I've seen some – every time you see a funeral, they're always wearing clothing you go, 'they would never wear that. They would never.' Um, okay. So I guess we're doing the full head to toe. It's proper open casket, not a half casket. Um, I learnt that recently, that white people generally don't do that at their funerals. Someone said this to me. They said they don't have like an open casket. I was like, 'oh, at a black funeral, you – there it's very open. You see – you walk up, you can go right in. You can touch the nose if you like.'

KIRI: Wow.

DARREN: You can do everything. Yeah, yeah. Um, no. You know what? We're going to go Doc Martens, a pair of Doc Martens. Probably the brogue Doc Martens, which I think are the best Doc Martens. I love those brogue ones. Uh, basically what I wear on the Apollo. Um, basically what I've worn on the Apollo would be great. That – you know what? Both my Apollo appearances, I would be more than happy to be buried in both of those outfits

on there because they're just – they're just nice. Very understated.

It – you know, it is my day, of course. It's my funeral. Everybody can see me. But, you know, I'm still very understated. Hopefully if it's my, um, second Apollo appearance and because the casket's open, somebody would like shake my hand and they'd see like the – the little fringe would come out. They'd see the little fringe in the jacket. That would be great. But yeah, I think those – I think they would be – they would be great. I think they really represent me a little bit.

KIRI: Maybe we can get some like animatronics in so like your thumb comes up. You know like at the end of Terminator?

DARREN: Yeah.

KIRI: And – and so we can see the fringing as you go in to be cremated.

DARREN: Exactly, yeah. Or if they can do both my arms and then I'd look like a zombie just waking up. Yeah, I'm into that. As long as they see the fringes, I don't care. That's fine.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Darren Harriott, the emo too scared to get a piercing. What a great tagline. He is always so well turned-out, in person and on TV. It makes sense that that is his sort of number one concern going into situations. He knows the jokes will be fine. But what if they don't sign off of that fringe jacket? Also when he said he's giving away all his clothes that he's never opened to charity

shops, did anyone else think, 'I need to find out where he lives and raid the local charity shops'?

Um, we've had some really lovely messages from you guys. Um, Danielle messaged after the Siobhan Murphy episode where I, um, I think you can hear, get my boobs out on camera to a woman I've never met in person. Um, she says, 'the Curvy Kate recommendation. I've never heard them before, but the minute I get paid I'm going to be ordering everything.'

Yes. I don't get paid or anything by Curvy Kate. I have been sent some free bras, full disclosure. And they are great. And the reason I bang on about it is because I know being a lass with big boobs is an absolute nightmare to find stuff that's comfortable and flattering and not just, you know, nana bras. I've done a whole stand-up routine about it. Um, so yeah, that is a recommendation of mine, but no one's paying me, just so you know.

Bea sent us a message as well after listening to Pascoe's episode. It's really funny what resonates with people. I can never call it out. She says, 'I love that you brought up paint on blazers at school, because it brought back a buried memory where I purposely got oil paint all over mine to protest having to wear a uniform.'

Oh my god, absolutely love – that's such a, um, like the impotent rage of being a teenager. And be like, 'actually I don't want to wear a uniform, but I am going to put paint on my blazer.' And that your parent has paid loads of money for as well. Bet they were furious.

Alex sent a great message after Siobhan's podcast saying, 'I love Siobhan so much.' Don't we all? 'Her ability to make colour so powerful is just so impressive.' I agree. It is powerful in Siobhan's

hands, isn't it? Because she really really conveys joy and confidence and like what are we trying to convey more than that when we dress ourselves? Okay, sometimes we want to look really fit. I've just thought sometimes I just want to convey the fact that I'm incredibly attractive. Um, immediately regretting saying that.

Dee said about Siobhan's episode as well, saying, 'I listened to this episode yesterday and it was great. I'm massively pregnant now and it's made me feel inspired for when I can access my old wardrobe and put on my socks without grunting like a rhino.' So eloquently put, Dee.

Yeah, I hope you guys are finding it inspiring. I've found the chats really inspiring and I know when it's been a particularly good one, although I'll be honest, there's been no duffers so far. I mean I'm sure there's one in the post. But, um, thus far it's been great chats. I go away getting excited about different bits of my wardrobe that I've remembered about. And, you know, the things that I feel like I could – I feel – basically I feel empowered to be more creative with what I'm wearing. And I hope it's doing the same for you.

Now this episode is going out in August. The weather hasn't been great, but I hear there's a heat wave in the offing. So this week's small business, um, is a swimwear business. Um, so please meet Mitra the Label and the woman behind it, Emily. So she makes swimwear that goes up to 6XL. It is a slow fashion brand because each item is handmade in the UK. So the idea is that you get very high quality item but it lasts much, much longer than your average swimsuit. So basically you pay more but you invest in a bikini or a swimsuit that lasts years. So they go for timeless cuts and designs as opposed to sort of, you know those bikinis that are like a quid?

And it's whatever the fashion is for that year? Like that's not sustainable.

Um, but the idea is that you would invest in one of their swimsuits. Emily takes a zero waste approach to the garment production. In fact, look at the patchwork swimwear that they make out of the off-cuts. Um, I think they're my favourite ones. And because of the fabric used to make them, the end goal is circular production. So they can take back your old items and recycle them into new pieces. I think it's such an amazing way to look at doing things. All the packaging is biodegradable and eco-friendly.

But it's the material itself that is so impressive. The yarn is created from recycling unwanted waste from around the world such as fishing nets, industrial plastic, and fabric scraps. So they're collected by organisations like the Healthy Sea Initiative and then made into the yarn that is then used for these swimsuits. It is such a brilliant, brilliant idea. Um, do check them out. Um, and really timeless like stuff that I think suits everyone. Um, so that is Mitra the Label. I hope you enjoyed learning about that small business.

I genuinely – absolute joy to seek them out. Booking the guests and talking about the small businesses on this is – it genuinely makes my heart sing.

So thank you so much for listening and giving me a reason to do this other than just sort of entertaining myself. Please keep spreading the word like you have been. Um, it makes a huge, huge difference and I just – like I say, I'm really proud of this. I want to keep making this for a very long time. So the more people who hear about it, the more chance we have that it keeps going. Next

week I'm going to be chatting to a style icon and fashion designer. It is the brilliant and so, so charming Coco Fennell. See you then.

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.