

Who Are You Wearing – Sindhu Vee

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN: Hello and welcome to the Who Are You Wearing podcast where I, Kiri Pritchard-McLean, chat to very stylish folk about their relationship with clothes and fashion over the years. This week's conversation is shocking and moving and profound and hilarious, but I would expect nothing less from comedian, actor, and writer Sindhu Vee.

This episode was recorded in May of 2021. Sindhu was at home in London and I was sat on the floor, giving myself a dead leg, in my walk-in wardrobe. Um, I always feel so self-aware when I say 'walk-in wardrobe,' but, um, I think it's what other people would call a junk room or a box bedroom. Just in case you think I'm a Tory. Uh, I think you're all familiar with Sindhu, but I don't think you'll be familiar with this side of her. She is spectacularly open, and as a result we talk about grief and bereavement, so just a heads-up about that. This is a really special listen, so take some time to yourself for this one because you are not prepared for where this chat goes, as I ask Sindhu Vee, 'who are you wearing?'

SINDHU VEE: My first memory – and it's not a visual memory, it's like a knowledge memory, is being in public kindergarten in the American school in the Philippines, so I must've been five, five and a half, six max. It's what in this country they call reception. And my memory is there's twins. So everyone in the class was white except there was a boy called Mustafa, who I still know, uh, who is from Pakistan. And there was me, who was from India. And we fought all the time. It was, 'Pakistan is better,' 'no, India is better,' 'no, Pakistan is better.' And everyone was like, 'what are you talking about?'

Everyone else was white, they were very international. There was twins, Abby and Mandy, and they had pink ribbons in their hair and they had blonde hair and they wore matching dresses. And they had like socks with a frill and they had those kind of Mary Jane shoes. And they looked like their mother loved them.

I became aware of clothes because my mother, even though she loved me, behaved like she hated me because I wore a like four for ten pesos kind of like – four t-shirts for ten pesos from like a flea market. Not – not a flea market, but like a street market. And it had a red – there was a – it – it was a white t-shirt and it was red on – half red and half blue and the red bit had polka dots. And they were bought for my sister, who was older, and then I wore them when they became hand me down. But because my sister was so much larger than me, they never fit.

I wore shorts from the supermarket, jelly sandals from the supermarket, and underwear that was my sister's and had been handed down that was too big. So I used to have to hold my underwear with my left hand. I looked like a – have you seen that movie, um, Slumdog Millionaire? The slum part, you know? Where those little brown kids are scrawny and they're like really full of life but they're slum. I looked – and I had like short boy hair. I looked like a slum-dwelling – I was so dark in the sun. I was like a dark little slum – slum-dwelling skinny kid, and then there was Abby and Mandy.

KIRI: Wow.

SINDHU: And I became aware then of the power of clothes to portray that we are loved, that – that we are – have – that you walk into a room, you have power. You look like somebody. And

then you have people who walk into a room and everyone is like, 'what the fuck happened to you, dude? Are you from the slum?' I have such a strong memory of feeling – not maybe articulating it like that, but feeling deranged with shame about how I looked.

KIRI: Wow.

SINDHU: Of course. Of course. You're – you – could you be othered in any more ways than that? Um, and I say all this with a great deal of compassion for myself as that five year old, for – a great deal of understanding of my mother, and a great deal of joy. Because I am one of the people that had that experience and by the grace of god was able to come out owning it. Many many people don't. And so it's not to say that, 'oh, you should put your kids through that because then they'll be strong.' No, they might break.

All I can tell you is for whatever reason, and that's why I say the grace of god, I came out. I owned it. It took me years. Because alongside that, when we came back to India I was told that I was very ugly because I was dark and tall and it was horrific. I was told every day, 'you're so ugly, who's going to marry you? You're so ugly, who's going to marry you? You have to get good grades, you're so ugly.'

So it was – I – the amount of therapy – hello, the amount of therapy where I've had to like understand what this meant, um, and I – yeah. So all of these things, you know? So yeah, I have a very early memory of what clothes and how you look – how you dressed means and meant. Um, and then I've had a series of experiences in my life where I brought that awareness to bear on it.

I was – I – I, um – I, um, I was asked to model once in India on a – to open a live show. And it was a very big deal. And it – they just – they just saw me somewhere and said – and they were – it was a – it was a French fashion house and they'd come to India for the first time and so I – there I was. It was like I was the belle of the ball but in my mind I was – I – I don't have a single photograph, I didn't want to know. Because I felt so unattractive. I felt like it was a joke and I couldn't own it. And the clothes were so fabulous and great.

And I was – I had always been told, 'you're very ugly' and, you know like, 'minimise yourself. You're too tall, you're too dark, you're too –' So when that came for me, 2% of a part of my brain said, 'you're not ugly, these people wouldn't have picked you.' But 98% was like, 'this is the worst joke ever, you've got to stay the fuck away from this. Never ever ever believe this shit.' And then fast forward many more years and I'd lived in the west a long time by then and people, you know, I didn't feel quite as – or I – rather I did think my height was an asset and my hair was an asset. Because I had very long hair, Kiri. Very long.

Then I – I joined banking. Banking is all about power suits and power and, you know, and it was interesting because I had a lot of power suits and I wore heels, but I never felt like I belonged. I did very well and I loved it, but I had been doing philosophy and banking was sort of a – I'd gotten into it more so I had paperwork to stay in the west. And I wasn't necessarily very good at it. Like I wasn't smart and I didn't really care about making more money. I just – I don't know, I don't know. I loved it but, you know, I wasn't good at it. So all the power suits in the world couldn't have helped.

Um, and on dress down Friday when everyone wore branded clothes, I would wear a shawl and Indian flip flops and really casual clothes and walk around barefoot on the trading floor. And I think it was very much because I was trying to assert who I am. And I'm not a very – I'm – I might have clothes that are expensive or have a brand, but I'll never be like, 'oh, here's the brand.' It's because those clothes work. And they might be vintage, they might be secondhand, or they just might be something I bought in India 30 years ago, you know?

So think that's another time when I realised that clothes and our relationship to clothes and the power that clothes can give you only exists in your mind. It doesn't exist externally. Which is not to say you shouldn't be powerful in clothes or wear Armani suits, it's just don't expect the Armani suit to give you that confidence. It can help some.

KIRI: Yeah, that's right.

SINDHU: And then I think it's from then on that I, um, you know, that I really pursued this – because for me, what I wear and how I look and who I am and how I feel are also integrated because as a girl being raised to have an arranged marriage, I was – I had, you know, I was a terrible basket of ingredients. I was too tall, I was too dark, I was, you know, this, that I told too many jokes.

My mother used to say, 'when the boy comes, don't tell the jokes. Last boy who talked to you, he complained to his mother that you told him favourite flavour of ice cream is stupid.' He said his favourite flavour of ice cream was pistachio. I was like, 'what? What is the matter with you? That's disgusting.' And my – and he went back to his mother and said, 'she's not serious. She talked about ice cream.'

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: So you're in this school and there's the perfect little – sounds like Shining twins that are – they're having their – and you've got your bits from the market and bits from supermarkets and hand me downs. But what was your – what was your style as a kid? Did you have a strong sense of style? Were you like, 'I want to wear that'? Or you're like, 'just shove something on and then I can get on with my day'?

SINDHU: No, dude, I didn't have that much agency. My mother chose my clothes until I was 18.

KIRI: Wow.

SINDHU: What are you saying? I didn't have that much agency where I had style. It was like my style was, 'don't get beaten up because of what your mom made you wear.' That was my style.

KIRI: So until 18, Mum was picking your clothes.

SINDHU: Mummy used to – yeah, like I could wear what I wanted to college, but I couldn't really like – if we had to go anywhere, I couldn't really, you know, um, be like, 'oh, I want to wear this.' Mom chose my clothes. But that's – it wasn't that unusual, really. But okay, so here's a couple of pictures I'll show you. This is me when I'm one and a half and I had a ceremony they do for little – you can see all the coconut and everything. But I liked flowers. So can you see this? Can you see this?

KIRI: Oh my gosh.

SINDHU: There's me with a flower in my hair.

KIRI: So gorgeous.

SINDHU: So I guess I liked flowers. That's me. Mum used to say, 'you're always putting flowers in the hair.' Um, but this how my mother dressed me up. So this is my sister's birthday, which I've taken over because I'm a fucking pain in the ass.

KIRI: Oh, yes. You look gorgeous.

SINDHU: I look deranged, by the way. But that's my sister's dress, which I got to wear. Um, and then – so I didn't really have style. I just wore – I just wore what they told – but my Mom had so much style. Oh, by the way, remember that t-shirt I told you? So my mom had them in all the sizes. Here's my sister and me. And my sister's like 13. She's got a version of that t-shirt. And there's me. I know. And by the way, even my cousin was like, 'your mom once gave me a t-shirt.' And then she sent me a photograph and it was the same fucking t-shirt. I'm like, 'how did – how many of these did Mom buy? It's like she's like completely crazy.' Anyway, yes.

KIRI: So your sister.

SINDHU: Mhm, very stylish.

KIRI: How much older is she than you?

SINDHU: Um, so I haven't said this out loud and I will say it, and then we'll have to move through it because it'll be difficult otherwise. My sister was six years older than me. She passed away on the tenth of March.

KIRI: I'm so sorry. I'm sorry, love.

SINDHU: For anyone listening who's lost a sibling, whether you were close to them or not, yeah. It's tough. It – I – you know, because they take away with you – with them a part of your childhood that no one else had access to if there's only two of you, you know? And, um, anyway, she was very stylish and she was very preoccupied with her clothing always. And that was the big fight that she used to have with my parents, because she – very rebellious and wanted to wear what she wanted. And I think that's also why I piped down. Because I was like, 'I don't want to have that with them.' Yeah yeah yeah. So she was very – and she was very cool.

KIRI: But did she influence you? Were you like – did you get the hand me downs and did you experiment? Or did she dress you up?

SINDHU: No. you know, it was weird. Because, um, so in the Philippines when she was sort of in her teens and I was still – six years is a lot when you're nine and the other one is 15, you know? She was having her own fights with Mom and – about clothing. And I was just wearing what I was told. Because nine and 15, it's – it's too much. And she was very busy trying to get a boyfriend and she didn't – she didn't want to dress me. She would've liked me to just please fuck off. And just let me alone. She read Mills and Boons that I had to hide from my mother. Um, so – so funny.

Um, and so then – and then when we came back to India she was in high school and had to go to an American high school, so she went away to school. And an American high school to boarding. And then I lived in a very small town with my parents. And so she still was quite Americanised and much more like – I used to think

of her as quite, 'ooh, she's so cool.' And, you know, uh, whereas I was like – had become like a small town Indian kid who my mother completely was like, 'you better fucking just listen.'

So then I was even more controlled by my mother. And I didn't mind, though, because there were other kids and my mother didn't raise me in a way that was not Indian, you see? So it was like everyone was like that, then it was fine. Um, I wasn't influenced by how my sister dressed because I didn't have the access that she had. Plus she was very petite and I was already 5'8". And she used to be furious with me. She said, 'if you grow any taller I'll kill you.' I was like, 'ugh, how's that going to work?'

Um, so no, I didn't – didn't – I, um, I don't remember having anything in common with my sister fashion-wise because of our circumstances. But also she – I didn't live with her after she was ten. After I was ten. Because she was in boarding school and then she was at university. So I didn't permanently live – like share a room or anything like that. And she had a – and then she moved to America quite early and she had a very different dress sense than me. I was always casual, slightly eccentric.

So the difference between my sister and I was that my sister would read Teen Vogue and then be like, 'this is how I'm going to dress.' I would read Teen Vogue and be like, 'these girls are idiots. I need to do something' – but I think it's – for me it was a defence.

KIRI: Right.

SINDHU: Because I looked so odd in India. And my sister was very light skinned and petite and, you know, and, um, I was not. So I think my defence was to just not be like what's mainstream.

KIRI: Yeah. Because of course you see all that happening and being rewarded and you're being told that you don't fit into any of that. So you'll be like, 'oh, well I'm not even in – I don't even want to play that game anyway.'

SINDHU: Exactly.

KIRI: 'I'm going to do my own thing.'

SINDHU: That has been – that – that is my middle name. Sindhu I'm-not-going-to-play-that – play-the-game-because-I-don't-know-how-to-play-it-and-I-can't-ever-make-it-work Vee. That's my name.

KIRI: [laughs] So were you ever putting clothing – when you're sort of back in India, your sister's away, your mum is like – you're getting it sort of – it sounds like, from what you're saying, a typical Indian upbringing.

SINDHU: Yeah.

KIRI: Compared to the people around you, were you ever made to wear anything that you hated then?

SINDHU: All the time. What do you mean? I mean I had to wear the worst clothes all the time. I – so – if I – because I went to school, I had uniform. At the convent. We had the blue uniform. That's fine. Came home. My mother never spent money on clothes. She thought it was ridiculous. She made clothes, she had hand-me-downs. So I was always wearing something I hated. That didn't fit. And I was like, 'ugh.' Basically I was like FML all the time. But then I had to find a way to distract myself from the FML life, so I did other things. You know, I – whatever. And then every once

in a while someone went abroad or my uncle came and they got me one t-shirt with like Looney Tunes. And I loved it because it was so like great.

It's like I have friends who don't let their kids watch TV, right? And then their kids used to come to our house and just like have an orgasm in front of Tom and Jerry. I was like that around those clothes that I, you know, was like – what other kids had. So I always wore things I didn't like. I remember especially when I became 16, 17, 18. Because Mummy wanted to marry me off by 19. She was like, 'that's enough with you.' So she started – I started sort of being taken to weddings where other people could see me. Sort of like this kind of thing – whatever.

KIRI: Wow.

SINDHU: Ugh, anyway, um, I didn't really mind. But it was – it was just a bit odd. But anyway, it wasn't necessarily that unusual either. She used to put me in these saris, which were horrific, and this jewellery, which was horrific. And I had to go to these weddings. And I remember thinking basically FML. That's what I thought. I was like, 'fuck this,' you know? But then you did what you could. You just – yeah. I don't know. I don't know.

KIRI: Well see, when you say 'horrible saris,' because every time I've seen a sari it is the most beautiful thing in the world. I can't imagine a bad one because the colours and, you know, the fabrics are so beautiful and the – the jewellery's always stunning. I don't know how you'd get a bad one.

SINDHU: I think it's because you don't – because you – when you see that stuff, you think, 'oh, that's so nice.' It's like my mother when she comes here and sees someone wearing tartan

dungarees. She's like, 'oh, how lovely.' And I'm like, 'no.' Because you guys would, you know, it's like that – that – you know that kind of fabric which you associate with tablecloths here? And my mother sees a dress in that, she's like, 'this is the best thing.' So I think it's that. It's like you're – because it's so different for you.

KIRI: Right.

SINDHU: If you get into saris, you will start thinking that there are ugly saris. And if you're ever in doubt, I will show you some. I'll find you some photos of me with some ugly saris. Like just, you know, there's always a fashion, right? Like I would've liked to wear chiffons and French chiffons and those – my – Mummy put me in these heavy silk Kanjeevaram saris with gold woven – it was like, 'ugh, what are these old lady saris, man?' You couldn't say anything because she would get very upset.

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

SINDHU: Um, my denim jacket. I wore it all the time. It was such a – and Mummy never stopped me. She was like, 'yeah, whatever. This is like your university time. You can do what you like.' So I wore that all the time. And then when I was in first year of college, so after – like after A-levels, so I must've been 18, 19. I started going to a flea market called Sarojini Nagar with my friend and my cousin, and we would buy this fabric. It's called cheent. It's basically different printed kind cottons. And they're what a lot of women labourers wear because it's cheap and it's cotton.

And I would get these long skirts with lots of like – these long Indian skirts that women who do manual labour on the roads wear. And I would wear those, um, and I'm going to say this out

loud on the podcast. Doesn't matter. And I would wear that with a t-shirt and my denim jacket and this like massive printed floral crazy skirt and no underpants. I'd go – I'd be like, 'you know what? I'm not wearing underpants to college today.' By the way, no boyfriend. No boy liked me. So it's not like there was an agenda there. It's just like, 'why not?' And, um, it was mad. We used to have these days when we would just not wear underpants. Because we were wearing this huge gathered skirt. And I think it looked very cool to wear a t-shirt and that.

And I think it was very – it was interesting because we were so self – or I was so self-conscious about how I looked and how much people were judging me, but I really leaned into it. I leaned the fuck into it. And it was almost like I was like – sometimes when you're, you know, when you're unhappy and then you – when you're young and you're very unhappy and you think, 'if I pinch myself I'll forget how unhappy I feel because this pain is worse.'

I felt like I was leaning into really looking incredibly outlandish so that it would take away from how – the everyday message of how outlandish I was. Which was something I could not control. I could not control my height, I could not control my complexion. So what I did was I just went all the way.

KIRI: This – yeah, this is so interesting. So your – it's like, uh, almost like failing on your own terms. So you're, 'oh, if you're going to make me an outsider, I'm going to show you how much of an outsider.'

SINDHU: Exactly. Yes. And –

KIRI: Wow. And it's interesting to me that the – that the skirts, which feel very traditional, mixed with this homemade prints-

enthused – it's a sort of like a – it's very fashion to mix these traditional things and subvert them, I guess. That's a really political thing.

SINDHU: Yes.

KIRI: Is that your rebellious phase then, do you think?

SINDHU: 100%. I started smoking then, of course on the sly. I – and I had very long hair. I used to have a braid where if I sat down, I would sit on it. Like I had very long hair. So I started to put it on a bun on the top of my head. I mean I was – like you noticed – first of all you noticed me because I was like a tree walking around campus. I mean I was 5'10". And then there I came in like these clothes that, you know, it was like, 'what the fuck is going on with her?'

And I didn't get any kudos. I – you know, but I – I sort of would look – I sort of was like, 'yeah, and?' And I think it was my – in hindsight, I think I was – it was an incredible act of, um, agency. Of revolution, to use a very big word, you know? I mean it's – it's almost shameful that I'm using such a word to apply to myself, but let's talk about it like from a macro point of view. It was a revolt that I was willing to go to the wire so I had some self-worth. But it was on my terms, exactly what you said.

KIRI: So interesting.

SINDHU: I mean at the time I didn't feel it was like that. But I – I can see now, I have a 17 year old daughter, so I understand what 17 year olds are. And I look back and I think, 'that's what that was about.' I mean I was considered a freak, you know? There was no chance of getting a boyfriend looking like that. But I didn't care.

KIRI: It's like armour then, right? You're putting on this stuff that's like, 'you keep away. You can't reject me because I'm not letting you anywhere near me anyway and I'm just doing things my way.'

SINDHU: Yeah. 'You – you can't reject me because we're not on the same planet, you know?'

KIRI: Wow. Amazing.

SINDHU: Yeah. It's like walking around saying, 'well, I don't like Mars.' It's like, 'you've never been to fucking Mars, moron.' You know?

[Both laugh]

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: And so what were the big trends when you were a teenager? Were you going in for those at all? Or were you – and – and were there different trends in India as there were, you know, in – in Europe and – and America and you're picking from everywhere?

SINDHU: No, I mean the trends, you know, I – I went to Delhi University, it's very sort of, you know, we were very educated. We had a lot of access to – not – I mean, not everyone at Delhi University, but St. Stephen's College, Hindu College where I went, um, uh, these were all, you know, these were all elites in a sense, you know? Their – our parents were educated, they were professional. So it's not like we were small town anymore.

So we had access to western fashion ideas. People had Vogue. I didn't have the money or the means to follow those trends. And I

made myself believe that people who follow fashion trends that are in magazines are vacuous, which was a terrible judgement, but it was again a defence. Because I didn't have access and I didn't want to be in that game.

Which is why when I was suddenly picked by Yves Saint Laurent to open their show in India, it was a huge problem for me. Because I was like, I had a moment of being made to feel like I could be more than mainstream. I could win at mainstream. And I ran in the opposite direction out of fear of failing. Because ultimately all this stuff was about – all of this great stuff that we're – I'm calling, 'oh, I was – you know, it was revolution or this or that,' it was coming from a place of incredible insecurity and fear. It wasn't coming from a place of inclusive generosity and understanding of, you know, the world –

KIRI: Or empowerment.

SINDHU: No, it became empowering because I just practiced how to be myself. But it was coming from a terrible place of unhappiness. Of fear. Fear. And self-loathing. Um, so when YSL showed up, I was like, 'the – fuck you. Fuck you.' And, you know, and it's to this day my friends are like, 'we can't believe that you never' – like I didn't tell people. Yeah. And all the Indian – the four Indian models who modelled then made huge careers out of modelling. And I was asked – they asked me to go with them to Paris and then my father said, 'absolutely not.' And I was like, 'yeah, right. Absolutely not because that's vacuous.' I probably would've become a complete drug addict, but that's by the by.

Um, so no. I had no access. I didn't have money, I didn't want to be in the trends. But the trends were the same. I remember it was very much like, you know, there was like – boys had mullets, uh,

kind of thing. And also I remember the trend was just to have nice jeans and acid wash denim and all that stuff. And, you know, that was – but where would I have had any access to any of that? We didn't have money. We weren't rich. We were, you know, we were very well-off, but in India there was a big divide between people with a lot of money and people who were professional elites. Who had educations and sent their kids to – so it would be like the difference between someone who could go to Eton, that they had money, versus someone who put their kid in a grammar school back in the day.

I was like that – that kind of, you know, the second kind. So yeah, so I didn't go for all the trends. I – I wished – I wished I could've, but I couldn't have, so I just went the other way. But I obviously was very, you know, I didn't – I didn't show up in something that was a kind of a cheap version of a trend. I showed up in a fucking cotton skirt that the – in – that the labourer women wear and a white t-shirt. And no underpants. I didn't say I was wearing no underwear, by the way.

KIRI: But you knew, so that's the important thing.

SINDHU: I knew. And it was such a great feeling to know that and no one else knew.

KIRI: So the – it – I'm fascinated by the Yves Saint Laurent thing. So the – did you get like spotted? Is that how it came about?

SINDHU: Yeah, yeah. They just walked up to me, yeah.

KIRI: Well of course. You would see this gorgeous dark skinned 5'10" with a huge bun on their head with this denim jacket and – of course, that would be the girl you pick. Of course.

SINDHU: It was at a – I – I had decided to apply to, um, Oxford for – to study. It – and I needed to – I needed admission, I – I needed money, I just – it was like a way-out thing. But there was a process. I was in the process and one of the things in the process was you needed to do an interview to show your interests. And I was like, ‘ugh, my interest is smoking. I can’t do that.’

So I decide to then bulk up my CV. And I love animals. And my father’s friend told him that World Wildlife Fund was looking for volunteers because they were doing an international movie festival of wildlife movies at the India International Centre, which is where my father was like – it’s like a kind of a – it’s not a club like a necessarily social club. It has a library. It has cultural programmes.

KIRI: Right.

SINDHU: And so I was like, ‘oh, I’ll volunteer because that’ll help my –’ you know, I was like – in my head I was like, ‘oh, then I can say bla bla bla.’ So I volunteered for that and then they had – and then for – there was a bunch of us, but lo and behold I was the head of the volunteers. Of course I was. Talked my – literally fucking scammed my way into that thing. But I knew a lot about animals, so I was the one who was like, ‘yeah yeah yeah, I know this, I know this.’

So we were doing all the films and they were done in the most fancy hotel in Delhi at the time called the Oberoi. And because all the delegates had come from all over the world and they were dying in the heat, so we had to put them in a A/C environment and that was that hotel. And so I had to run the films and give a

little talk about the films and make sure the delegates were happy.

And my dad's friend was there as well, and then afterwards we had a dinner and we were all sitting at dinner. And the previous month there had been – in the newspaper, because remember this is – there's no internet. Everything is in the newspaper. If someone died you read about it in the obituary. That's how you found out they were dead. There was full page ads the previous month. Had been running full page, which was unusual in India, in block capitals, saying, 'are you over 5'8"? Would you like to model? Yves Saint Laurent coming to India. Apply here.'

And I remember reading that everyday and thinking in my heart, 'wouldn't that be something?' And then thinking, 'but this is for girls who model. This is for girls who are pretty. Yes I'm over 5'8", but this is not for girls who have academic ambitions. I'm going to make something of myself.' Like all the thoughts. Because I read the paper everyday because I had to discuss the newspaper with my father everyday. We had that pact. Everyday I saw this ad.

Anyway, that's on the side. And so we're at this hotel and we're doing all this thing, and then we're sitting down at dinner with the delegates, and I'm sitting down and this man walks up to me and he talks to – he starts talking to me. And I'm like, 'sorry?' And he starts saying something and, 'bla bla bla, and Yves Saint Laurent, and the show the day after tomorrow.' And I was like, 'I don't – I don't.' And he was French. And my dad's friend had lived in Geneva. I don't know.

They started speaking and he was the director of the show. And he was like, 'we're starting day after tomorrow. I've seen her. I wanted to open the show. We've been in rehearsal for four weeks

but I want her to open the show.’ And I was like, ‘no.’ And my dad’s friend was like, ‘oh, I’m going to talk to her dad. Don’t worry.’

And the next day I showed up and, um, I’d never seen anything like it. There was naked women running around. People dressing them up. I was like, ‘what the fuck is going on?’ And there was a line of Indian women. And I remember I passed all of them and they said, ‘right.’ And there was a model in Paris called Khadija. And she was of African descent. And she hadn’t been able to make it. So they were like, ‘that’s her clothes.’ All her clothes had Khadija, Khadija.

And I was like – and they were like, ‘so –’ and it’s day after tomorrow, so they put this woman on with me who taught me to walk. Ten hours. Both days. And that was it. And I went on the third day. It was mad. I’d never experienced anything like that in my life.

KIRI: I’m amazed that you didn’t – did you not get bitten by the bug? Or was it again, you know, when your father was like, ‘you’re not going,’ were you like – was that again a bit of failing on your own terms? Being like, ‘yeah, well I don’t want to do it anyway.’ Because – because to you in your head you’re this – you’re this not attractive girl. I mean we can all see that you’re absolutely gorgeous, but in your head you weren’t. So is it you go, rather –

SINDHU: In India I wasn’t.

KIRI: Yeah, of course. Yeah, the – the standards there. So were you going, ‘you know what? I’d rather –’ there’s a bit in your head going, ‘I’m going to turn it down rather than turn around one day

and say, “actually, we don’t want you anymore” or “you’re not the look that we want”?”

SINDHU: No, I don’t think it was – it went that far. Again no one has asked me these questions in so long, or I think ever, so if I look back, because, you know, as the mother of a teenage girl, I – I now look back at myself in those years and I am able to remember what I thought, uh, with some distance, you know? So it’s – there’s more accuracy. Because there’s more honesty.

It was such a massive fucking thing that had happened that I needed my parents to – to support me or say, ‘go and do it.’ I had no – I didn’t have anyone – I didn’t come from that world. I didn’t have anyone to give me advice. I didn’t have anyone to say, ‘yes you can.’ I – I – we had very close family friends, she’s almost like an aunt to me, she’s the one that talked to my dad about letting me do it. He wasn’t going to let me do it because he didn’t rate modelling.

Because remember, this is the 80s. This is supermodel time. And this is 1990, maybe. 91? I don’t remember. It had to be 90 because I left in 91. And at that time models were all about coke and drugs and – you know what I mean? And these were westerners. So my dad was rightly concerned.

She was very fancy. She had gone to Paris and she was very fashionable. And she made my dad let me go. And we had a dinner the night before the, um, before the opening of the show and she gave me one of her French chiffon saris. And she blow-dried my hair. I’ve never felt more beautiful in my life. Just for that dinner. It was incredible. It was incredible. I remember thinking – I remember feeling like I was in a dream.

Um, but anyway, I needed – I would've needed support. I would've needed someone who understood and said, 'it's okay. You can – you got this. We have it.' You know, sometimes I read about young people from underprivileged backgrounds who say, 'well, we couldn't have joined finance. We couldn't have applied to Oxford. We didn't have anyone in that world. So I had the grades, but I didn't know, "can I?"' And this is a version of that.

KIRI: Yeah, of course.

SINDHU: I had no one. And I had lots of people saying, 'you don't do that. You? You're not – you don't do that.' And I think it's the same for young people who can't apply to certain universities or certain jobs. Their families say, 'well you can't do that.' But because it was modelling, it – there was also a – a sort of school of thought that said, 'women with brains don't model.' And so I was able to sort of hide behind that.

KIRI: Yeah, right.

SINDHU: So for many, many years when people asked me the YSL question or in, you know, when I – I always said, 'well, it was not academic.' But now with all this – with the – with the beauty of hindsight is, I recognise that it was something – my parents didn't know what it was. I didn't know. And it was huge. And I think if I had gone with YSL, I may have had a drug problem but I think I would've had an extraordinary career in modelling. But I – it – who – who could have – no one knew that road map. So it just happened and then it happened and it was done. And also all – my mother, my – my parents didn't come to the show. They were like, 'you go do that and then we're done, alright?' So yeah.

KIRI: How old were you?

SINDHU: 19.

KIRI: Oh my god. Baby. Baby, right?

SINDHU: I was a child. I was a child, yeah. I'm going to try and see if I have a – I have a picture of the dinner. I didn't – I refused to take the press packet. Imagine.

KIRI: I'm going to try my hardest to try and hunt this down.

SINDHU: My friends in India have tried so hard. But YSL never came back to India. And so – and then there's one of the women who also modelled lives in London and I bumped into her at a dinner party. And she's Indian. And I tried to talk to her about it and, you know, she totally, totally aired me. Because I think she still remembers that she had had to go for months of rehearsal. And she was like, 'it – you – oh yeah.' And then she just wouldn't talk to me. She wouldn't even reply to my emails about, 'do you have any pictures?' She became a model then. Like a big model.

KIRI: Wow. Well of course. Imagine being like months and months of rehearsals and then some kid, you know, with a huge bun and – walks in. They're like, 'oh by the way, you're going to open the show.' It would destroy you. Of course she's like that. Of course she would hang onto that.

SINDHU: But she had a huge career and, you know, but anyway, some – I think she has photographs but I wouldn't know because she won't, um, she won't give them to me or she won't help me. But, you know, that was then and this is this. And that's what I keep saying to my friends in India. I'm like, 'what if people think I

made it up.’ They’re like, ‘oh, please.’ And I’m like, ‘I know, I know.’

KIRI: Um, can I ask then, when you’re walking that runway in gorgeous, gorgeous Yves Saint Laurent clothes, did you – did you feel different? Were you like, ‘well, I could get used to this?’

SINDHU: No.

KIRI: Or were you so worried about your walk that you were just out of it? Was it like an out of body thing?

SINDHU: No, they had put all this big makeup and I didn’t look like what I thought was pretty, you know? I look like one of those like – weird, weird makeup. And I thought I looked horrendous. I still don’t like makeup. Um, and so I – no. When I was doing that walk, I wasn’t thinking about how I was looking.

Like with everything in my life, Kiri, and you’ll understand this because you know me in comedy, I had a responsibility. And I was going to make it fucking – I was going to do the best fucking walk because I had a job. I had a responsibility. I couldn’t let people down, you know? And you know how I’m like that. I realise that now when I see how I’ve functioned in comedy. I’ve decided something, I’ve taken it on, I’ve given my word, I’m going to do it. So I think that’s what I thought.

But I – I still can – if I close my eyes, I can so easily recall the – they held it at the – at the – on the – on the ruins of the fort in Delhi. And – and they had lights. And I remember there were thousands and thousands of people had come to see this thing. It was huge. Because in India thousands of people is not that hard also, you know? If you open your window and say, ‘hello, I’m doing this

show,' fucking one thousand people just show up anyway. Um, and I remember walking and it was just me. And there was all these floodlights and music and I just remember thinking, 'I hope I do this well.'

KIRI: Wow.

SINDHU: Yeah.

KIRI: That's so you, though, that there's almost like no joy in the moment. Other people would be like, 'I can't believe this is happening,' or like, 'of course this is happening.' And you're like, 'I'm going to fulfil my contractual obligation and I'm going to do it to the best of my ability.' It's like so Sindhu.

[Both laugh]

SINDHU: Very much so. I was like, 'I've got to – I've got to do this the right – I've got to do this walk.'

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: So if I was to describe your style, it's expensive. You always look expensive, I think. And there's always polish. And there's always a softness. So there's textures and there's like rich jewel tones. But there's a real femininity to it. When did that start appearing? Because I feel like it – that doesn't fit with your other, your – I mean you've had so – I feel like you've had 19 lives in – in one.

SINDHU: I have.

KIRI: But like your – the world of finance, that doesn't – that feels like that might be a very bold way of appearing there, so I – did that exist?

SINDHU: I didn't – I didn't dress like that then. In finance I wore what I was supposed to wear. I wore very – but I was a very sort of, I, you know, I had my moments of wearing – even my suits, they were not like – they were always suits that had a little bit of a something going on. And I always used to feel, um, and this is something that I think this podcast is – this is the right podcast in which to say this, even though it's a very nascent idea for me. It's only really came to me this year, in the last three months. I have always worn what I was supposed to wear with a little bit of a something else going on. Always.

And I – up until I think April of this year, 2021 – I have always explained that when asked or even when I've thought about it or when my kids have asked, my – my teenage daughter, why, I've always said, 'it's because I have to make a statement because I had to fight so hard to not feel like a misfit appearance wise.'

I think that's a smaller part of it. Because for many years I haven't felt like a misfit and yet it has continued. What I think has been going on is inside of me there's always been a creative person. But never has that creative person had a voice. Because it was not academic. It was not what good girls do. It's not what marriageable girls do. Also artists die hungry. What is art? You need to do something to support yourself. You have to be a responsible daughter. You have to support your parents. All of which are great messages.

But even six years into stand-up comedy, I would not have described myself as a creative person, let alone an artist. I've

never – I’ve – ‘oh, I fell into stand-up. Oh, it – I was catapulted into it. Yeah, I like telling jokes. Ah, but I can’t handle – I’m not creative.’ But I think the fact of the matter is, Kiri, I think there is a great creative energy in me. Not great like it’s great, but I think it’s a force.

KIRI: Great.

SINDHU: So I don’t mean great in terms of achievement. I mean in terms of just magnitude. And I think –

KIRI: But it’s objectively both as well, mate. Like you’re very good at what you do.

SINDHU: But – but there’ll be years. There’ll be – there’ll be fallow years, but that won’t make me less creative. You see what I mean? I know that, and that’s how life is. And I think that creativity has gotten out in the clothing. And in the style. Because there’s been no other outlet.

KIRI: Love it. It – it is that, isn’t it? It’s that – it’s the, you know, your creativity is – is like a – water and it’s a thumb on the tap, and it’s got to fire out in some direction and it’s been this – this pop of colour here or this subversion of that there, and that’s your way of being artistic.

SINDHU: Always. Always. I mean and I – more than anywhere else, I would say on the trading floor. You know, I had a lot of access to fashion because we had money. Um, and that’s what you do. And I could’ve worn the most incredible power suits that were straight up Giorgio Armani, you know, great. But I always wore power suits that had one thing about them that was just what we say in India, hartgai. That stands aside by itself. Away from the crowd.

Hartgai means away from the crowd. Always. And it could've been the tiniest thing, but I knew.

And so the trading floor was very much like that. It wasn't a big deal. It wasn't like people, you know, but the – people said, 'oh, what the hell are you dressed as?' As I got more – not more senior, but as I spent more years, became more confident, I did get comments on, you know, I started wearing trouser suits a lot more. And if I wore a skirt suit, the skirt was tiny. And the heels were high.

And I would walk into a room very much like, 'this is what I'm wearing and I'm a woman. Go ahead and look at my legs because I don't give a fuck.' And I think that's a very – that's a message to men that I'm not wearing this so you give me a deal. I'm wearing this because I like my fucking legs. And you're going to give me a deal anyway.' And I think that was very much my thinking. It was – it was quite aggressively not flirty. You know, which is a power that women have had to have, you know, in very male environments.

Um, yeah. And then I – but I had a lot of trouser suits. I remember, though, these triggers. These moments of being – of being just sent back to the days of being at the international school as a five year old and being mocked for my clothes. I – I bought a suit once, um, and it was a very light, uh, it was a linen suit and it was a very – it was sort of a mix between quite a dark lilac and a light purple. But it was – the fabric, because also Indians were big on fabric, the fabric had a sheen to it. So if – in the light, it just would have a – and I wore it – and I used to wear it to work and it was very wide trousers. And it was a great suit and it was a long jacket. Um, I don't remember the brand.

Um, and there was three guys on my desk. Nice guys, lovely guys. They all were better at their jobs than I was because I didn't understand the complicated math, um, that goes into some of these options trades. And the one who was nice to me and explained to me was the most senior. But he was also the guy who did the most coke on the desk and had – he was like the real party guy. One day I remember we were getting ready to do something and I was there and he turned around and he made a comment about something – oh, I want to – I'll remember. Um, something and the magic raincoat.

KIRI: Not Joseph's Technicolour Dreamcoat?

SINDHU: Yeah, there you go.

KIRI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SINDHU: Yeah. And he said it and they all laughed at me. He said, 'oh, there she is in her Joseph and the Technicolour suit.' And they all laughed at me. And for a moment my not knowing the job, my being the most junior person, my not being good at what was about to happen, which was we were going to try and price a trade, took me right back to being that five year old girl in front of Mandy and Abby and they used to mock me. And I remember – I've never forgotten. Look, I can still remember that story.

And it was because of how I was dressed. And I remember thinking – I remember feeling so small. And never – and then putting the suit away. And I didn't wear it for a while. And then I wore it again. And, um, and I – I had to have a talk with myself. Because I didn't look like all the other women on the floor. Because I wore these kind of slightly off, you know, no one would

wear a light mauve dark, you know, suit to work. Everyone was black and I was like, 'fuck that.' You know?

So I remember that. And I remember I went to get my biggest bonus. I remember I knew I would get a big bonus that year. I went in a tiny, um, skirt suit with a really fitted jacket. And I was tiny then. And tiny skirt and it was blood red. I remember blood red. And I went and I sat in front of my boss and I was like, 'so what are you going to pay me?' It was great.

It was – it – but I – at the time I didn't think that's what was happening. But I was always using my clothes to put myself in a certain position. And it was never about seeming feminine or that, you know, guys would – it was always what I thought I was looking. I was always projecting something. Always. I didn't know that. I didn't know that then.

KIRI: Amazing. Amazing.

SINDHU: Isn't that crazy?

KIRI: Your – it's, um, it's so gorgeous because your – your clothes are telling us something about you that you didn't even know. And then also your – your kind of like – weaponising's the wrong word, but you were engaging clothes to tell a story about yourself you want to tell as well. And then inadvertently it's telling this other thing that you didn't even realise.

SINDHU: 100%.

KIRI: Oh gosh, it's amazing. Absolutely amazing. But that – that style is – obviously the creativity's still there, but that's – I – I can't imagine you doing stand-up in a tiny blood red power suit now.

SINDHU: No. No.

KIRI: That's a different journey to where we are. So did it – did how you dress now and how you present yourself now, um, did – is that only since coming to stand-up? Or –

SINDHU: No, no. So let's just – I'm going to say something that's going to blow your mind. When I had two kids and I was very bored I started a fashion business. Yeah. It's called DeviDoll. Um, it was called DeviDoll, D-E-V-I-D-O-L-L. Um, and it was online and it was high end fashion but all ethical. And it was in 2006 and I couldn't get funding for it because it was so before its –

KIRI: What?

SINDHU: Yeah. You can google it. Anyway. And I started a blog called Curate Your Consumption. And it was all about dressing like you were buying from Net A Porter but everything you owned was – had an ethical component. Because in my opinion, women want to look good and feel good, but they – you know, my idea was that you should wear the best looking clothes but they don't have to be fucking with the world.

And you can't solve all the problems, so just if you made sure – so I had five criteria. And all the clothes that I sold in the – it was a boutique, it was online. Um, had to fulfil at least one. But on the others it couldn't be like, 'yeah, we have a crèche for, you know, the – the mothers that hand loom this, but meanwhile we're killing –' it wasn't like that. It was like – so it was early years, I tried to get funding and it just – no one understood what I was talking about. They were like, 'what?'

Um, and in those years I became a buyer, right? I – I – so I went all over. I googled and I did my research. I set it up by myself, which was stupid because I didn't know how to run a business at all. But I, um, I learnt a lot about ethical fashion, I met a lot of designers all over the world, um, and I – what I did was I learnt about fashion and, you know, the litres of water that it takes to grow cotton versus this versus that. And I set up this boutique online. And in the process of doing that, I really, really, really learnt how I wanted to dress. I didn't necessarily dress that way, but I wanted to.

And I was incredibly lucky. Because you have to remember, I was a mother living at home with a bunch of savings from banking. Because I wasn't a big spender, you know? And I was always taught to save. And that money came in handy because I didn't want to take money from my husband to start a business because I thought that was lame. Because if I ever wanted to leave, I've always said, 'if I need to leave this marriage, I want to have like – I want to be like, "and I didn't even take your money, asshole."' Like that's always been my thing, which is so unfair. It's not like my husband has ever made me feel like that's something he would – but I always had that, you know, independence in me.

And so that's when I really, really, um, began to think of fashion as a full-time thing. And that helped me to develop what was my style but not the confidence, because I was coming out of a very conservative mindset. Remember with my mother and my looks and then banking. But fashion was mad. It was mad. The world of fashion was mad. Like you couldn't be too outrageous, you know?

And I also learnt the limits of my outrageousness, you know? I would – so I learnt in the process of that business, which by the way went bust, because in 2009 I was like, 'we're coming – this is

not going to work.’ I knew enough about finance. And I couldn’t get funding. People didn’t understand ethical fashion. They were like, ‘what?’ So I wrapped it up and, you know, I still have – and I bought stock, so I still have some stock. Imagine. Um, so it was there that I really was able to make some peace with myself and my looks and, um, how I wanted to dress. Um, and yeah. I just – some things became very clear to me and I never had to question them again.

KIRI: What – again, another – just another part of your life I had no idea about that I’m like, ‘I’m course she, uh, invented like ethical high-end fashion before everyone else.’

SINDHU: I didn’t invent it.

KIRI: Of course.

SINDHU: You know, now I – now I see on Net A Porter they have Net Sustain and I’m like, ‘ugh, I wish, you know, it had been there then.’ But, um, yeah. But you know, you – it was – I think the bridge between academic banking Sindhu and stand-up, someone who did something that – it – because a business is still very – it’s numbers and strategy. And it’s not – it’s not fun. But fashion, that was the bridge. I lost all my money, by the way. Because business is expensive. And I didn’t have any funding. So whatever money I could put in it all went away. But that’s the cost. It’s like I – I would’ve gone and done an MBA or, you know, gotten – that was the cost of bridging academic numbers Sindhu with comedy.

KIRI: Oh, amazing.

SINDHU: Was – that was a very fashionable bridge.

KIRI: And the clothes that you wear now, which are always gorgeous, do – do you use any of that knowledge of your business? Is it like, ‘oh, I found this designer or I had this bit?’

SINDHU: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. So I – I have – I do. Um, my knowledge from fashion is that style is – looking stylish is 98% confidence and 2% what you’re wearing. So I use that all the time. I don’t have that many clothes as I have clothes that – I mean I have some like slouch around the house clothes, but the clothes that you’ve, you know, the clothes that I’m seen to be wearing on different TV shows or this or that, I know why I bought every single piece of – every single item of clothing.

I know why, I know what it meant to me. I know, you know, I care about it. I have clothes – I was wearing a jacket yesterday. Actually this jacket right here. This one. I bought it on Hampstead High Street in 1997. I had moved here to work and I wanted a jacket and I wanted to buy something nice and there was just this shop. It wasn’t a brand. And I bought it in 97. And I wore it yesterday and I immediately remember what it was like to get a pay check. You know?

KIRI: That’s gorgeous. Because I think clothes can, they – they tell stories about us and they tell stories to – to yourself as well, that you remember where you were when you – you got that or the feeling of the first time you wear it or when you thought you left it on the bus. That – there’s history in clothes.

SINDHU: Oh my god, I lost my – my cheap fake leather leather jacket I think when I’d had just when the baby was born. The baby, the third kid I have, which is – which is not a baby. I left it on a – I left it somewhere and I’ve never really recovered. That and a pair of sunglasses. My Marc Jacobs sunglasses that I bought on

sale in Las Vegas once. I've never recovered. Like I see photographs with those sunglasses and I'm like, 'fuck that photo.' Like I just hate it.

KIRI: I have a leather jacket that got stolen at a house party that I got from Primark, and everyone was like, 'where did you get that leather' – and it was like 20 quid or 25 quid, uh, which was quite a lot of money to me as a student, but I also knew that was really cheap as a leather jacket, and it was amazing. And it just looked good with everything.

SINDHU: I know.

KIRI: And when someone stole it at a house party, I was like, 'you mother fuckers.'

SINDHU: You motherfucker.

KIRI: And I do the same thing. If I see pictures, I'm like – yeah.

SINDHU: Yeah. The leather jacket that I lost, the zip broke and I took it to India and had the shoemaker put a big zip on. So like the zip was completely out of sync with the jacket. And I left it somewhere and I'll never forget – never forgive myself.

KIRI: Awful. It's worse than losing a passport, I think. Like –

SINDHU: Well, well – in a way, yeah. Because you can't get that same jacket back. But I would like not to lose my passport while I was travelling.

KIRI: Yeah, that's true.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: When you're getting dressed to perform or – or, you know, just not being at home in your slouchy stuff, let's say, do you think of – because I – when I think of you, one of the things I think about is your stunning hair. But do you think of hair and makeup as part of the outfit? Because you said you don't really like makeup.

SINDHU: You know I don't wear makeup. I hate it. I don't really wear it. I wear it on TV because they make me. Um, you know, if you ask anyone who does hair and makeup for all these shows, I'm always like, 'can I have no foundation?' They're like, 'no, please just shut up.'

Um, hair is always – I think of it. And I always, you know, my hair's pretty standard. It – I blow-dry it and it's there. Um, it's interesting in stand-up, the whole issue of how I want to look on stage. My – when I started stand-up, I was so conscious of wanting to make how I looked invisible so that how I sounded was visible, that I wore like the uniform. I had a button – I had a shirt with buttons and $\frac{3}{4}$ jeans and flats. And I – I had a lot of friends from my – civilian friends who used to say, 'oh, you're on stage, are you going to show your legs? Are you going to' – and I was like, 'no no no.'

It was a bit like banking. I wanted to make sure I was not seen to – not remembered for my legs, but for my work. And I think in some ways I was not – I think being in comedy, I'm able to talk about feminist thinking quite easily with different women, whereas on the school run it doesn't come up, you know? It doesn't come up.

But we are – sort of stand up has this way of talking about issues. And we are performing, and so it's all very live, you know? And it's very alive. And so I realise that my early attitudes to how I wanted to appear on stage were very much coloured by this idea that if women don't want to be noticed for – or that if a woman dresses up, of course she'll be noticed for how she looks. And then what does she expect? I had that voice in my head.

KIRI: Wow.

SINDHU: And I kind of behaved like that because it was so big in banking. And I didn't know what the – what the currency of comedy was yet, because I hadn't done it that long. So I made sure that I looked very plain, you know? Um, when I did my first TV thing for BBC live, I wore a pale blue off – button-down office shirt with flats and jeans. That was it. I was like, 'people are not going to remember these clothes. They've got to remember my jokes.'

Which, um, so that was interesting. I've evolved since then in a – in a few different ways. One is I – I think it was right for me not to lean in too much to how I looked on stage, because it would've been on my mind more. Not on anyone else's fucking mind, my mind. And then I'm there for jokes, you know? So the more comfortable I've become on stage, the more certain I am of myself, my routines. I now will dress up if I want to.

Um, you know, when I hosted Apollo, I wore – I wore a shirt that I like out on a blue skirt and Converse. And I was like, 'that's what I'm wearing.' And the shirt had polka dots and the Converse had graffiti. And I was like, 'no, that's my look.' And I think my – my attitude in that moment, and I hope for my own daughters, is that glamour – you are glamour, not your clothes. You are glamour.

You are the achievements. You are the strength and you give that to those clothes.

KIRI: Yeah, well I think you – oh my gosh, you exude glamour. Even now when I'm chatting to you and you're in your like – you're like, 'oh, I've got an Under Armour vest on.' Like you still look –

SINDHU: And I smell, by the way. Just – bit gross.

KIRI: And you stink. Like – but you're still – have this glamour and this grace and this – just empowered self-assuredness that is – style. It's what – it's what people talk about when they talk about style.

SINDHU: Yeah, and so you are the glamour, you know? You are the talent that makes the jokes. The jokes don't make you funny. You are the talent. You are the energy. And it's in you. And I don't know how long it's going to take my daughters to find it. I'll try and do everything I can to help them, but you have to tap into that. And then the clothes, they sing for you. But it's your voice, you know?

KIRI: Yeah. Can I ask, now you're being creative and acknowledging like the power in your own creativity, do you think those bits of water, you know, coming out of the tap at the end, do you think that they have like settled a bit? Because you're – you're not needing to – to – the – the creativity has another outlet now.

SINDHU: Yeah, absolutely. I don't think – I don't think I take it, you know, I don't think I go out dressed the way – because I – I dress quite outrageously by the standards of my civilian friends. Um,

but I wear it now when I – when I dress now, I don't feel ready for a war, you know? Like, 'what are they going to say or what am I –' you know? I – someone said to me the other day that I dress like I have a very young soul when it comes to dressing.

Because my son is 19. He's 6'6". He's got some great shit from these, I don't know, brands like Supreme and Vetements. He buys it on like – he does some like vintage this, that. And I say, 'this t-shirt is very nice, can I try it?' He says, 'no.' I say, 'please.' He says, 'no.' Then when he's sleeping I take it from his cupboard and I try it. And I wear it out. Um, I feel very playful about clothes. And so I – on the one hand I don't think about it so much, but on the other hand I do think about it but I don't – I don't feel like I'm thinking about it because it's like a play. It's like I'm playing.

So, you know. And I think I feel so grateful these days sometimes when I walk out of the house with something mad and I think, 'oh, that's such a mad –' And then for a moment I stop and I think, my mother, my culture. Yves Saint Laurent. All the steps that have – I've gone through to get here. Because I think now – now I can do what I want. Now I – you know, I've learnt.

I've gone through the – remember in 'Kill Bill' she has to go and she meets that guy and she has to carry the buckets of water and he punches her in the face? And all that. And then she gets out and she can be like – and like just kill people by looking at them. I feel like I went through all those years and all that stuff. And now I can play, you know? And, um, and I'm not 31. I'm not 41. I'm 51. I'm 51 years old. But I mean, do the maths. We just talked about my age and like –

KIRI: Yeah, I know. But I – yeah, but I'm looking in the face of someone who's – who's like the same age as me if not younger.

And yeah, well also there's this strange show where you're like, 'I'm 51.' I'm like, 'oh my god, I could look that good at 51.' I'm like, 'I don't look as good as you now. It's not going to happen at 51.'

SINDHU: But I – but I think – I think, um, 51 – 51 – I think in this day and age, uh, with all the things that women are able to do, hopefully we can do more and more, um, and with science having told us so much about our health, um, I've never felt younger at some level, but also never felt more – more like, 'whatever the fuck it is, bring it. We'll be fine. I'll have fun. It'll be okay. Or I'll cry and my heart will break and then I'll be okay, I – as well.' Or, 'you know what? I look great. You don't fucking like it, buddy, move along. Move the fuck along. I don't give a shit. I love it.' And I have friends who love it, so I don't give a shit anymore.

That whole vibe, I don't think I had in my 30s. I – I know I didn't have in my 30s. And 30s was like, 'oh, my – this – who am I going to marry?' Or – I was already married, sorry. 'How many kids am I going to have?' Whatever. And I, you know, I – people say, 'well you don't seem 51.' I don't feel 51. But even if I felt 51 it's a number.

And by the way, men at 50 who have achieved a lot, they're like, 'oh, powerful.' Well I'm here to say that women at 50 who feel like they've achieved a lot and have a lot more to achieve – fucking we also have squeezed out a few puppies, some of us. The rest of us have been bleeding out of our cooch for most of our life. We are fucking amazing, alright? So just pipe down. Just change your focus. Look at us. I mean –

[Both laugh]

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: I wanted to ask you about this journey that you've taken with clothes and style, you know, your mother, your culture, Yves Saint Laurent, as you were saying, you know, finance, all that stuff. Are there any trends that you have tried to pull off along the way that is – that like it's just not happening?

SINDHU: Oh my god. Totally went through a Kate Middleton kind of phase, Sloaney, when my kids were super young.

KIRI: Really?

SINDHU: Yeah, when my kids were super young and I thought, 'okay, well that's what I do now. I – you know, I couldn't hack being – staying in banking and having children because I'm lame. That was my narrative. Um, so, and my husband's still in finance. So a lot of men who are doing well in finance, they have these beautiful wives who are, you know, they're house makers. Homemakers. So they pick wallpapers for the children's room and they - ooh, what are they wearing? They're wearing tight fitting jeans, boots, Gucci boots to the knees, and like a cashmere sweater and a little blazer.

I – it was a uniform. And I did that and after a while I was like, 'I'm so bored.' So then I started doing things like I got this guy in Bombay to make this massive bejewelled buckle on a belt. It was like as big as my torso. And so I would wear this outfit and then put on that buckle and everyone was like, 'what the fuck are you wearing?' And I'd be like, 'oh, oops.' Or – or I started wearing hats. I had all kinds of chapeaux. I had all kinds of hats I would buy. I was still trying. But I did have that Kate Middleton Sloaney thing going on. Eh, It was fine, but – ugh.

KIRI: Oh god, I wish – I – I can't remember how long we've known – maybe like six years, seven years.

SINDHU: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: Maybe longer. Um, but I – every time you describe a different Sindhu, I was like, 'I wish I knew her. I wish I knew her.' And I do because I know you, but like every one I'm like, 'oh my god, what an –' they all feel like different women as well. Like iconic in their own ways, but like completely different women.

SINDHU: No, if you – I'll – I can put you in touch with a couple of my friends who've known me the whole time. I'm always the same. Like it's just the outside stuff that keeps changing, but me is always the same. Um, it's always the same. It's the sort of, uh, yeah, it's – it's this person but with different clothes or a different love interest or whatever, whatever, you know?

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Oh, I love it. Um, I wanted to ask you about, while I remember, your gorgeous jewels that you wear. Because you have a couple of rings that you wear and I – I've – they are just the most stunning things. Do you –

SINDHU: They're all – all from my mother.

KIRI: Do you always wear those?

SINDHU: Yeah, I always wear this one, because my mom told me to wear this. And she said, 'I'm giving you this. I have had the prayers done to it. When you wear it you will be less bitch.'

[Both laugh]

SINDHU: I was like, 'um, what do you mean?' She said, 'your mood is terrible, you're always whining, shouting at children, and telling husband I would like a divorce. I don't want that to happen. So you wear this. You'll be less bitch and everyone else can be happy.' So it was to help my mood. So I wear it all the time. And of course I wear it now because as you know my mother's passed away.

And all my jewellery is from my mother or my husband. I don't – I – I haven't, you know, Mummy wanted me to wear jewellery. That was one thing I never wore a lot of jewellery and she'd get pissed off because she would say, 'it's not ladylike' and, 'what's the matter with you?' So she gave me a lot of jewellery over the years.

And, um, but left to myself I'm not wearing bangles, I don't – you know, I wear whatever earrings I have on. I have this all the time. And then I have a ring I wear when I go to gigs. I'm nervous, I'll feel it. And it's a ring my mother gave me because it always reminds – and even when she was alive I wore it all the time because it just makes me feel like her blessing is with me. So even if I do badly, it's fine. Um, yeah. That's it, man.

KIRI: What's the – the stone, what's in the stone of the one that you're wearing now?

SINDHU: This is, uh, emerald.

KIRI: Oh my god, it's enormous.

SINDHU: I know, but as I said to Mummy, 'that's a very big emerald.' She said, 'you're a very big bitch.' I was like, 'oh. Okay.' I didn't realise it was by size, but – of bitchiness, but okay. You know.

KIRI: [laughs] Well I'm going to have to start being more of a bitch so when my engagement ring comes it's what I have hidden in my mind.

SINDHU: Exactly.

KIRI: Because yours is like a bumblebee or a thumb. It's huge.

SINDHU: It's huge. It's huge. But also you have to remember emeralds and all these jewels, they come in different qualities. So like this is probably a very – it's not a bad emerald, by the way, but it's not been, um, treated and polished to the way that, you know, uh, that this is still what's – what we call raw.

KIRI: Yeah. Gorgeous.

SINDHU: So it's expensive, but it's not like, you know, I don't – I don't know. And it's not a brand and I don't know. I don't know what it costs, she didn't tell me. She said, 'I don't mind if I'm bankrupt, as long as you're not bitch.' I was like, 'I don't even know why you're making such a big deal out of it, but okay.' I had – you know, Mummy.

KIRI: [laughs] Um, can I ask you about your oldest item of clothing, then? Because you're saying you – I mean the jacket that you've got there you've had a few years, but do you – do you hang onto stuff that you love, then?

SINDHU: Oh, yeah. I have so many – I have the outfit that I wore the first time I went on a date with my husband. Ever. Ever. The first time I spoke – it was the first time I properly had a conversation with this guy. Um, I have that outfit still. I have – what is the old – so that would be 1996.

KIRI: So do you have that out of sentimental value or because it was a great outfit or both?

SINDHU: Oh, no, it's an Indian outfit so I had like six Indian outfits I took with me abroad in case we suddenly had to go to an Indian event. And that was one of them. And then when we got married and it showed up and I was like, 'oh, look at this.' And he was like, 'you have to keep that.'

KIRI: That's so cute.

SINDHU: So I kept it.

KIRI: Have you got an item of clothing that you can just put on and you immediately feel amazing in?

SINDHU: Oh, yeah. 100 – are you joking? 100%. I have a – well they're both jackets. One is a blue reversible big hoodie type jacket that I took off my son and it says 'leave me alone' at the back and it's navy blue. Um, and the other is – I bought it in a – in a vintage store in the United States. It's a mustard coloured oversized, um, baseball jacket with a massive – it's mustard and it has a black 'S' on it. It's not for Sindhu, but I like to think it's for Sindhu. And it's – it's so outrageous in its colour and its oversizedness and then the 'S'. I literally could be going to the opera – forget the opera, the Met Ball, and I'd wear that and I'd feel immediately better.

KIRI: I haven't seen it and I really want to see this jacket because it sounds absolutely amazing.

SINDHU: It is.

KIRI: What's your relationship with shopping, then? Do you – is it something you enjoy or is it – do you see it as a chore? Do you do it online? Do you want to do it in person?

SINDHU: I used to hate shopping because I didn't have money so everything was like, 'can I afford this? Can I afford that?' And everything was, you know, and – and is there anything more soul destroying than a changing room where you go in with the clothes you want to wear and you wear them and you think, 'fuck my life. FML.'

Um, by the way, I – I recently sent a text to my husband in which I put 'FML' and he's like, 'what is that?' And I'm like, 'it means fuck my life.' And he's like, 'what a great term.' So now he uses it like inappropriate – like at – in situations that are not fuck my life. Like, 'we ran out of my favourite yogurt, FML.' I'm like, 'that's not FML. That's just go to the store and get some yogurt.' FML is for big shit. How can it be, 'I ran out of my kind of yogurt?' There's four other kinds of yogurt in the fridge. 'No, no, I don't eat those. FML.' It's not FML. Anyway, sorry. That's a small digression.

So I used to hate shopping. Um, I – I like shopping now because I do it online exclusively. I hate going and, uh, trying on clothes and taking all the clothes to the changing room and then back. But also I've done that a lot, so, you know, sometimes you've just – have had enough. So I'm lucky enough that I've done that enough, just because I've been alive a long time. And also I shopped.

Um, so I now – I have a rule now, which is if I don't love it I'm not buying it. If I don't love it, I'm not buying it. And – and because the – you know, I don't need more. And I'm fucking running around in gym clothes the whole day. So I'm – no, I have to love it. So if I put it on and it's like, 'well yes,' I'm like, 'okay, done.' If I put it on and I'm like, 'yeah, um, I –' no. No. No. And if I put it on and it's anything less than, 'oh, um,' then it's – what? Take it off.

KIRI: I think you're just blown my mind. That is such a good way to – I – my problem is consumption. And I know it's very bad for the planet. Um, and if I applied your 'do I love it' rule I would have a lot less. That's such a good, good rule. Because do you think about sustainability when you're shopping?

SINDHU: Well I did – I did have Devidoll. So I have – I – okay so, and I – and – and I say this with absolutely no judgment, because my – the circumstances of my shopping have been quite different than many, many people because I did work in finance. I have never been to Primark. I have never shopped at Zara. My kids, I've shopped for them at Zara because kids get through a lot of clothes, so every once in a while.

Um, I try wherever I can to have – to take time to think, 'do I have to buy this here?' Because if I don't, and I think that this business is – Primark had a very strong presence in child labour in India and really pissed me off. But I cannot reiterate enough that my mother, had she known what Primark was, would live inside Primark. So this is not – there's no shade here at all, you know? It's not – it's easy for someone with my resources, coming out of finance, to have these opinions. I don't at all believe that these are opinions that everyone should have. I mean who am I, Gwyneth Paltrow? Oops, can – should – should we take that out?

[Both laugh]

SINDHU: Uh, but even as a student, so fast fashion, which I have a real bug bear about, fast fashion didn't really exist when I was a student. You went to charity stores. So I dressed myself exclusively from Salvation Army when I first got to the – North America. It was great. I had like – because I just – you could buy things for two dollars. And, you know, that was great. We didn't have fast fashion. And now fast fashion exists and I think fast fashion, of all the ethical things that they – that I care about, fast fashion is the one that I think is a big deal, but I understand why it exists.

All I can do is live in it as an example to my girls and, you know, so like I say, I shop sometimes at Zara for my younger one because she's growing. It's very difficult for me to keep up – it used to be Gap, you know? And also the whole notion of something being an ethical production, you have to look at the entire supply chain. So there are places that say they're ethical but if you go all the way down the supply chain, you realise there's always going to be things that are not ethical. So there's no black and white. There's no yes or no. You've got to draw a line for yourself and then live inside of that line. So, um, yeah, so that's – that's about my ethical thinking.

I have never – I don't wear fur or leather. Like I wear shoes, but in clothing I don't because I think, 'well that's unnecessary.' Um, I once stood outside a Joseph – we were walking past – to start shouting because they have rabbit fur. And my husband just left. He was like, 'I can't even stand here with you. You're crazy.' Um, but also he's Danish and, you know, Danes have historically had fur. So like my mother in law has her grandma's fur coat. But she

wouldn't go and buy fur now. And also now I don't think we really – there's such nice faux fur.

KIRI: Exactly. Yeah.

SINDHU: What the fuck are you doing? I don't understand. Like what is the problem? So I have a – I have two friends I'm really close to and they wear fur. And every time they come over I'm like, 'if I didn't fucking like you this much, you would be out on your ass and I would've thrown paint on this shit.' And they're like, 'enough now already, okay? We know.'

Um, so you draw a line and you live inside of that and I think the bigger problem for fashion is not – is every woman buying fast fashion or not or is every woman behaving ethically, but the bigger problem – the bigger issue for women and fashion is are women interacting with fashion in a way that frees them. That they can play. Or is fashion caging them.

That's the bigger issue. If I had to pick one. Because I'd be like, 'you know, fast fashion is bad.' China is fucking the earth. So frankly by getting all white women to shop ethically, it's not going to change what China is doing just by what they're doing to the planet. So for the – for the sake of every individual woman, how she feels about fashion and whether it's caging her or liberating her is more what I care about. It's a very realist approach.

KIRI: Yeah, it is. Again like you and your ultra pragmatic like – the logic.

SINDHU: Yeah.

KIRI: That you don't often hear in comedy because you know, like – but I think it's your background of like you've had – you've lived in the real world where people just talk in facts and logic.

SINDHU: Yeah, you know, you've got to back it up, otherwise what the fuck are you saying?

KIRI: So what's the best item that you've got either from a charity shop or thrifted, secondhand, vintage?

SINDHU: Uh, two things. One is that jacket I told you about. The big one with the 'S'.

KIRI: So good.

SINDHU: The second is a shirt that my husband bought in a vintage store, which is the most – it is – it is the most airy, beautiful, old-fashioned worn cotton t-shirt. And it has the old Coca Cola logo and it's like red. But it's – like if you sneeze at this t-shirt it'll fall apart. So I like to wear it when I'm just hanging out at home but not – like when I'm in my bedroom.

So I wear it very little, because I don't really hang out in my bedroom. But some days on a Sunday I make sure everyone's okay and then I'm like, 'I'm going to my room, don't fucking come.' I'm just sitting there reading. Then I put it on because it reminds me of the 70s. And, you know, I was obviously very young, but there's something about that Coca Cola and that colour reminds me of a time when the four of us as a family lived in the same house. It's – it's a time, you know? In your head. And that Coca Cola and that red just takes me there.

And I feel like, uh, you know, in the last couple of years – in the last 18 months I've lost my mother and my sister. We've gone from a family of four to a family of two. I'm growing up, the world is changing, my son's going to be 20 at the end of this year, and sometimes you just need to remember where you came from and that life is very – it's a circle. And when I wear that shirt I feel like that. I'm like, 'oh. Oh, I see. I remember the beginning of this story.' So it's cool. I know it's a crazy thing to say. I probably sound like a lunatic. But I do feel that when I see that shirt.

KIRI: No, I think it's beautiful. I think it's a really – and I think a lot of us have an item of clothing that – that will take us back to a time where I guess things were simpler or safer or just different. A different you. And I think that's – there's great – there can be great comfort in that.

SINDHU: Yeah, my mother used to wear this beautiful Indian, uh, very soft wool, uh, Salwar, which was the pants, and this – got this sort of a top, which is called a Pheran. And you wear it over your other clothes. And she wore it all the time in the winters. It's a very light wool. Um, and when she passed away and then I was in the house, our house, I, um – thank you, sorry, we have to pause. I'm getting a nice cup of tea here from this lovely boy. You are the best.

SON: There's no ginger, by the way. It's just –

SINDHU: Ugh, that's okay.

SON: Well there is ginger, but it's got about 3kg of mould on it, so –

SINDHU: Oh, okay.

SON: Even that's – even too natural for you, so.

SINDHU: Yeah. Funny, haha. I'm laughing.

SON: Um, I'll see you later, Mum.

SINDHU: Okay, I love you, babu. Thank you. Sorry. Oh, how nice. He made me a cup of tea. So, um, when I went to the house after we were – I was there briefly just to clear up her stuff for a little bit, I found this outfit. And my mother – my mother always – my mother had a smell and it was a – she always smelled fresh. So it wasn't powder. She just had – and I smelt it. And it was her. And I took it. It's the only thing of hers that I took. That and, um, I took her glasses that she used to wear.

Um, and I brought it home and I put it in my cupboard, and every morning I would smell it. And when I had Covid I would smell it and it smelt of my mother. And I just think, you know, clothes and the things we wear – because in a way as a Hindu I do believe that we're also wearing this body, you know?

KIRI: Okay, yeah. Yeah.

SINDHU: You know, we are – we are all only our souls, whether you're a Christian soul or a Hindu soul. Even you guys have a – you know, not you guys, but Christians have a – Christians, Muslim, Jewish, we all have an idea of a soul. What the soul does and if it comes back and all is what's under contention. But in Hinduism it's repeatedly taught to us that just as you discard your clothes one day and wear new clothes, the body discards – the body's discarded like a set of clothes.

And I was smelling her clothes the other day and they don't smell of her anymore. They smell of my closet. And I was thinking, you know, that this is what it is, is that we – we will discard what's on the outside and we will move on. And until then, what you have to remember is what's on the inside is what you have to listen for. That's where the energy is, that's where the creativity is. And what you have on the outside is then a function of that. You know? Because now the smell of my mother has left these clothes and they're just clothes. I still smell them, though. Because I think maybe it'll come back. So yeah.

KIRI: That's gorgeous.

SINDHU: Yeah.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Your style now, which feels so complete and well-rounded and like this is your most evolved Pokémon form. But do you see it changing again or can you see – because yours – also your style is timeless. I could see a, you know, a 90 year old Sindhu in this stuff and it'll still look fabulous. Or – or can you see yourself getting wilder as you get older or more conservative?

SINDHU: I have absolutely no idea. I mean you – I don't – given where I'm coming from and where I've gone, and – I don't know. I really don't know the answer to that.

KIRI: The – to be fair, you – the lives that you've – I'm like, 'yeah, that's a totally fair –' like what life is next?

SINDHU: You know, the only thing I know is that now whatever is the next thing, it will be playing, it will be fun, there'll be less

angst. Um, yeah. Like I want to – for the sake of my daughters, I want to really celebrate how I – celebrate the time I spend on how I look. I want to celebrate that. I don't want to diminish it, I don't want to pretend. I've lived in every life. I've diminished it. 'oh, you know, it's only vacuous women that model. It's only women that don't care about – if you're a very serious academic you can't look hot,' you know?

I had a – I had a professor of law at University of Chicago, Martha Nussbaum. She dressed like she was a Vogue model. It was the hottest thing. I couldn't sit through a lecture without like having to change my underwear afterwards. She was so hot. I was like, 'oh my god.' And I don't mean that in a crass way. I mean she literally had – there was a sexual pull. I don't think she was exerting it, I think it was me. But the point is her brain was the – the most – one of the most articulate, sharpest brains I've ever come across. And I was at the University of Chicago. I used to walk past Obama to go to her class. Literally I didn't even care. 'Who's Professor Obama? Who gives a shit?' It was her class, do you know what I mean? What a brain. What a brain. And she dressed like a Vogue model.

And so I think I want to celebrate the time I spend, whatever it is. Whether it's in the smelly gym clothes or whether it's in something more glamorous, I want to celebrate the time I spent on how I dress and how I make myself appear in terms of my clothes and my style. Because I think it is something to be celebrated. But I don't think you can celebrate it too early. I think you have to figure it out. But you should know that there's coming a time where we'll just celebrate it.

So, you know, to not – because I think the worst thing is to not have hope. So, you know, no matter where you are in your life, if

you're feeling like you're not friends with your clothes and your clothes are not friends with you, and it's all that self-criticism and self-loathing, which by the way I still have a fair amount of self-loathing and a lot of self-criticism, but when – when we're in that space and it's like I'm – my clothing is my enemy, the way I look is my enemy, you have to know. You have to listen to what I've been saying and understand that you can come through it, and that there's always hope.

I mean I did it. Fucking Mandy and Abby. And – and all those years in India and, you know. I always found the little ways in which to lean into it and do this and do that. And we can all do it if we think it's – we have good friends and – I don't know.

But I just think there's a lot of hope. And you have to remember that women evolve. And I think there's so much pressure on young women to get it right. Well fuck, they're only 20. They have to fuck up and feel like shit. It's how we figure out who we are. Have you ever seen a caterpillar not look like it's in pain when it comes out of that cocoon? They all look like they're about – it's like ugh, they have all that spit and they're like – and you're like, 'what's happening,' you know? So that's what I think.

KIRI: That's a – that's a beautiful metaphor. But – but also I wish people could see the faces you were pulling as you were acting out a butterfly opening up.

SINDHU: So gross.

KIRI: Is there an item of clothing you can just always see yourself wearing?

SINDHU: Shorts. I always wear shorts. Shorts and – oh, okay, a specific item? Let's think. A specific item. Yeah. My husband sleeps in the same kind of t-shirt. He has 50. Because that's who he is. Which my mom used to say, 'see, he does not even change the t-shirt. You are lucky. He will never change the wife.' And sometimes when I don't have anything else – and they're big for me and they're long, and I always wear one of those. My whole life I can see myself wearing one of those. And it says – what does it say on the front? I think it says – it's a grey shirt with a white Nike. And he has the same shirt just lined up to – he always wears them to sleep. And I always see myself –

KIRI: Exactly the same?

SINDHU: 100% exactly the same shirt. I could always see myself in one of those.

KIRI: That's lovely. Um, are there any trends that you're hoping don't come back?

SINDHU: I think all the trends can come back because those trends were meaningful to somebody. So who should I choose to rob of their trend?

KIRI: [laughs] That's the most, um, like selfless answer we've ever had.

SINDHU: But it's a fact, right? Because I feel like, you know, I had the don't wear panties to university trend. I mean, hello, I – it was very meaningful to me. But who – which demographic should I pick?

KIRI: No, you're right. Yeah.

SINDHU: So hey. Knock yourselves out, all of you.

KIRI: Final question. Um, what – I don't know if you'll be buried, cremated, but what are you – what are you wearing in the – in the casket? What – what is your final outfit?

SINDHU: Oh, well that's very easy because, um, I'll be cremated. And I'll be wearing, uh, a new sari. And it's whatever my kids will pick. And, um, I will be wearing red because that's what women who are still married, when they pass away, and I will not pass away after. I – I can't. It will always be before my husband.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Well I cried twice listening back to that episode. Can anyone beat twice? What a woman Sindhu is. Um, incredible. I have spent a fair bit of time googling Yves Saint Laurent catwalk shows from the 90s to try and find a picture of Sindhu but to no avail. If anyone has any insider knowledge on that, please drop us a message on our Insta or, um, drop us an email. Wouldn't it be great to reunite her with some of the pictures from that?

I've had a great – loads of great feedback on Instagram, actually. Jen said, after Rosie's episode, 'I love Rosie's style. She is too cool.' She is too cool, isn't she? Like not in a sort of like, you know, leather jacket, uh, and can you tell I like the Strokes? Leather jacket, sunglasses inside cool. Just a different kind of cool. And Gwenllian said that she loved the episode.

What I loved is Rebecca getting in contact saying, 'I'm completely with Rosie on matching facemasks to your outfit.' What is the verdict out there from you guys? Is this – is this a strong look? Is it

– is it not for you? Is it too much stress? I try and coordinate a bit. Um, but the problem is, is that I see – I’ve got a lot of leopard print masks and leopard print is a neutral, so really it goes with everything.

You can follow us on Instagram @whoyouwearingpod. Or if you want to write to us and write us something a little bit longer, you can email us on whoyouwearingpod@gmail.com.

We got a really lovely DM on Insta that I’d like to share with you because I think you guys can help. Don’t worry, anything we share on here we make sure we’ve asked for people’s permission. So, um, this was after Coco’s episode and we were chatting about Tammy Girl. I’ve got a message saying, ‘I just wanted to say I agree wholeheartedly with the suggestion that we need something to fill the gap that Tammy Girl left. My daughter’s 11 and tall and not super skinny, but buying clothes that are cut for girls that are basically adult women sized but have yet to develop fully. So, you know, like boobs, hips.

It’s really tough and it has such an effect on self-confidence. I’d love to be able to put my needle and thread away and have somewhere she could confidently go to on the high street that caters for girls her age with appropriate clothes. Thank you very much for raising it. I hope somebody hears and fills the gap in the market. She’s just gone to high school and is rocking it, but teen fashion is so not designed for the fuller figured girl.’

Absolutely. Everything like teen – it was like that when I was growing up. It’s what – I think it’s more prevalent now, but it’s all sort of like really skimpy crop tops, like it’s stuff I would not have felt comfortable with when I was that age. And – and great if you do and you feel empowered to wear it, but like I was only like

maybe a size 12, maybe. 12, 14. But like, you know, could definitely – I know it's any size you can wear anything, but like, oh, I just didn't feel comfortable. It felt like already fashion was like making me unwelcome.

So there you go. Anyone who needs a business plan, start something for young people in that in between bit who want fashionable stuff but are not built the same as – as everyone else. And yet aren't in like, you know, fully grown adults' bodies yet. Um, it's a – it's a really interesting point to raise. I hadn't – because I don't have teenagers or – or children, I hadn't even thought about that. Um, there you go. Business ideas with Kiri Pritchard-McLean. My new podcast within a podcast. If you've got any recommendations, do get in contact, um, because we'll, um, we'll read them out in this end bit.

Um, we've had such a nice five star review. I – it's so nice when you guys review the show. I really appreciate it. Um, so this says, 'I'm not fashion obsessed, but hearing funny people talk about anything they're obsessed with is always insightful and interesting. This is no exception. And Kiri is a delightful host' – thank you so much – 'I'm looking forward to more episodes. This is going right up in my podcasts list.' Thank you, it means so much. And I love that you guys are reviewing it as well, because I'm terrible. I always forget to review shows that I like but it does make a massive difference for people finding it.

Um, now it is time for me to bang on about a business that I love. And Sindhu was talking about her ring, which I will forever call her Bitch Emerald. It got me thinking about ethical jewellery. So this can be really hard to find, but I thought I'd alert you to a brand that makes beautiful pieces and is a B-Corp. Now give it a google, B-Corps. It basically means they're like officially good guys.

There's only about 4,000 of them globally, and it's a very sort of high set of criteria you have to complete to become a B-Corp.

So Yala is an award-winning African jewellery brand who make small-batch, high quality jewellery with collaborators who are paid fairly and use eco-friendly materials. For instance, the thread that they use in the beading is made from old plastic rice and flour sacks. Absolutely amazing. The founder and CEO Audrey was born in Kenya and is based in Bristol and splits her time between the two places.

And the designs – honestly they're so beautiful. They're really, really stunning. Um, and it's basically, uh, an amazing mix of traditional making techniques and really modern designs. But like not modern in that way that like, you know, when people wear tin foil it's – it's meant to be modern. I mean like contemporary but timeless as well.

They've got a transparency agreement on their website so you can see what their makers can expect from working with Yala. Even the packaging is great. It's beautiful. But everything is either reusable or recyclable and/or compostable. They use vegetable inks and postage and packaging is recyclable too. They also offset the carbon emissions of their deliveries. Incredible. That's why they're a B-Corp.

So please check them out because Audrey and the team are doing amazing things and their pieces – they're really beautiful and elegant. Um, you know, because I know it's – it depends when you're listening to this, but Christmas is in, you know, like is in the offing. And if you wanted to buy something beautiful that someone would have forever, I really recommend the stuff that Yala make. It's gorgeous.

That is enough of me. Um, we've got a really great chat next week with Times best selling author and founder of CoppaFeel, Kris Hallenga. See you then and thanks for listening.

[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.