

## Who Are You Wearing – Kiell Smith-Bynoe

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN: Hello and welcome to the Who Are You Wearing podcast with me, Kiri Pritchard-McLean. I'm a stand-up comedian that is obsessed with clothes and why people wear the clothes that they do, especially very stylish people. So this week's episode is with good egg, phenomenal actor, and great dresser, Kiell Smith-Bynoe. I'm absolutely obsessed with every picture of him on Getty Images. I think this is a really fun, very different episode where, amongst other things, we will unlock the secrets of keeping your ass warm when your jeans hang down. I've finally got to ask someone and not seem like an absolute creep.

This episode was recorded in August of 2021 and Kiell was at home in London, and I was cooched up on the floor of the box bedroom I'm wildly calling a walk-in wardrobe. Now I think Kiell's roots into being a stylish chap are just – just very different to anyone I've spoken to before and since, and I think it makes for a fascinating listen. And I also laughed out loud so many times listening back to the edit of this. So please enjoy me asking Kiell Smith-Bynoe, 'who are you wearing?'

KIELL SMITH-BYNOE: I think maybe around sort of 13, I started to think about what I was wearing more. And I – I remember when like when I was – when I was much younger than that, and my mum would tell me that the clothes that I'd put on didn't match.

KIRI: Brutal.

KIELL: And I'd be like, 'but this is – this is what I want to wear.' And she said, 'oh, well you can't wear that because that doesn't

go with that.’ And like it was the sort of thing where I’d just like go in the wardrobe and pull out like a button-down shirt and then football shorts.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: And she’d be like, ‘what are you doing?’

KIRI: To me, though, it’s like absolutely how a hipster would dress now.

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. I was a young – I was a young, odd hipster. Um, that is – yeah, I remember a lot of mini tantrums about not being able to just throw these things together.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: And then somehow that just really became part of my everyday. And just like matching my clothes. So like even if I’m like at home, I always match my socks and my boxers.

KIRI: Really?

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Woah, hold on. This is – but this is mind blowing to me. Okay, so you will – as in like you will buy these things as a set or you’ll make sure they’re similar colours or they compliment each other?

KIELL: Um, colours, yeah.

KIRI: Wow.

KIELL: Yeah. I'll always – I think I even do it too much, like to the extent where it stresses me out sometimes because I don't have the clean socks that I would wear with those boxers. And then I have to change what I'm wearing.

KIRI: Shame.

KIELL: Even if I've like planned. Because I'll plan an outfit and just know that like, 'oh, the underwear's there.' But if I go in my underwear box and I can't find the ones I'm looking for that go with the outfit that I've planned, then I might have to change outfit.

KIRI: Woah. I cannot believe that your socks are dictating your outfits. That is absolutely incredible.

KIELL: Yeah, it's quite different. Like it's something that I've started now and it's actually like to my own detriment. Because I mean there's – it's 80% of the reason why I'm late for everything.

KIRI: It's the whole socks. Um, that is absolutely mind blowing and is going to give me an extra level of joy. When I look at your incredible outfits on the gram, I'm going to be like, 'a pair of socks decided that whole outfit.'

[Both laugh]

KIELL: Yeah, I, um, so maybe three weeks ago I had to go and do, um, some ADR for a show. And then I was getting dropped off – dropped home. And I knew that this was the only day that I had to pick up some socks from Uniqlo. Because Uniqlo do every – basically every shade of sock.

KIRI: Wow.

KIELL: Did you know this?

KIRI: I did not know that, no. Interesting.

KIELL: If you need any specific colour sock, Uniqlo is the place.

KIRI: Great knowledge.

KIELL: And I needed like a dark green. And then I had to go buy like – we finished ADR, it went late, and then the car had been waiting for ages. But I was like, ‘look, I have – I have to go to Uniqlo.’ Because there’s – there’s not one like close to me, really. So whilst I was in Central, I was like, ‘can you just wait another ten minutes? Because I have to go to Uniqlo and get some green socks.’ And that is what – in – I went to a wedding and I wore a green tie and green pocket square. But I knew that the socks were green too.

KIRI: That’s so good. And also so lovely to hear such a, I’ll say, unashamed diva story that the car had already been waiting for you and you’re like, ‘you’re going to have to wait ten, because I need these green socks from Uniqlo.’

KIELL: I’ve got to get these socks.

KIRI: Because of this pocket square I have in my mind.

[Both laugh]

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: I love it. So this – I can actually really see what you're doing in that like I remember when I was a teenager and when I was in sixth form, I would have like my school uniform but I would match like my accessories and my shoes and my bag would change everyday and they would be different colours that matched. And weirdly it was much easier and less stressful for me to dress like that when there's – than it was to like go, 'right, out of everything, what can I pick?' Because you just pick one thing and then everything else follows.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: So did you have this strong sense of style as a kid, then? Did you like like clothes or did you not? Were they just not in your mind until you were about 13?

KIELL: I think I just had clothes that I liked wearing. Um, but I never sort of wanted to put them together specifically for an outfit. I was just like, 'I love these tracksuit bottoms, I love this top and I want to wear this all the time.' But then I think I was also – I was really into red, um, mainly like massively when I was like 14, 15. Maybe like 14 to like 24. But before then when I look back, there are loads of pictures of me in red. So maybe it was a thing from my childhood that I like carried on. But I didn't realise it at the time. I think like I just had a lot of red clothes or – and my mum realised that I liked it and then just kept buying red stuff. And I kept picking that out to wear.

KIRI: That's really interesting. So you went through a whole stage, almost like a decade, of just trying to mainly dress in red.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah, all of my like – all of my pictures from like school times to maybe like coming up to – even around drama school and stuff, like if it was a specific event, I'd have like a red tie or a black and red tie or a – like, um, my prom thing as well was like a black and red Baroque style waistcoat.

KIRI: Oh my god, so glam.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: That's so bold.

KIELL: Yeah, I think I was always like just kind of obsessed with that. I remember asking my mum – I remember my mum asking me what colour I wanted my room when I was getting my room painted. And I said I wanted red. And she was like, 'okay, okay.' And I went to school. I had a good day at school, thinking I'm coming home to this red room. My room was so fucking blue. It was unbelievable how blue it was. Blue carpet, blue walls, blue like curtains. I was like, 'why did you – why did you say okay? You could – you could've literally just gone, "no" and then I would've gone to school and just like – whatever. Came home to the bluest room you've ever seen.

KIRI: Why the red then? Was it like a football team thing? Or –

KIELL: It might have been. Um, I remember when I was in year 5 – and you know when you got the, um, uh, the newspaper out on the desk to cover up the – to stop you from painting on the desks? And the girl that I really fancied was like, 'oh, Arsenal.' Because it was just like a sports page. And from then I supported Arsenal. And I remember like telling my mum that I needed to get an Arsenal top. But eventually getting that. And that was like when I

was talking about the top and the tracksuit bottoms, it was that top that I wore all the time, was the Arsenal JVC one. And then it was blue – like navy blue, um, Adidas bottoms with orange stripes.

KIRI: Love it.

KIELL: And I wanted to wear that everyday.

KIRI: So that was your outfit that you as a kid then – like you would put on and it was almost impossible to get you out of?

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Because I think we all have one of those growing up.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah.

KIRI: So the Arsenal shirt.

KIELL: Yeah. That – there was probably a good like two years where I was like, 'I'm – that's what I'm wearing.'

KIRI: Well who dressed you then? Was it – was it your mum or was it siblings or were you doing a lot yourself?

KIELL: It was – I think it was – yeah, I think it was mostly me. But then I got to like maybe the age where I started like noticing girls and stuff, and then I was like, 'oh, I want to dress nicely.' And back then, dressing nicely meant like Sean John, uh –

[Both laugh]

KIELL: Um, but my mum was always like, 'no, obviously not.' Um, and then when I got to the age where I could like go to Dagenham market and started getting like the – the fake like Evisa suit things and, you know, a lot of that.

KIRI: So were you ever growing up then, obviously you and your mum were having this like tussle over you and your mismatched stuff, but were you ever made to wear an item of clothing that you hated?

KIELL: When I would go – when we would go to like events. Like a christening or a wedding or a – something like that, my mum would always like dress me in these smart clothes. And in – in fact my dad was like – because I feel like – my dad didn't live with us, but my dad, I feel like he was always around for these events. And he was very like – my dad was very traditional shirt, tie, and suit. Um, for – I mean my dad wore trousers anyway, just that I never once saw my – my dad in – in jeans.

KIRI: Really?

KIELL: Never. I've seen my dad in tracksuit bottoms, and I've seen my dad in suits. And that's it. And, um, yeah, so he was very trousers anyway. But when it came to those like sort of smart events, he was always making sure that like I was dressed properly. And I – there were – there was this suit and I saw a picture of it recently and I'm stood next to my granddad. And I just look like a young priest.

[Kiri laughs]

KIELL: And there's like a – this collarless blazer and then my shirt is all like sticking out at – at the top. But there – there the collar's

over the – the shirt. And I just was like, ‘what? Why have I – why have I worn that?’ And just these big like flappy trousers. Hated it. I remember like anytime we came to like a smart thing I was just like – I was like fuming about having to wear this nasty suit.

KIRI: That’s so funny. Of course – you know I’m going to ask you for that picture.

KIELL: Yeah, yeah. I could find that, easy. Yeah.

KIRI: Obviously. That’s going on the Instagram.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: You know that now. Soon as you told me. It’s so funny to imagine you as a little priest.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Especially like tending to be religious events like, ‘who’s that kid who absolutely stans god?’ But like when you were a teenager, what – what were the big trends? And were you going in for them? Were you experimenting with it? Or were you like, ‘no, I’ve got – I’ve got my red and I’ve got my Arsenal top and I’m sticking to that?’

KIELL: Um, I mean I always wanted a Nike tracksuit just because everyone had a Nike tracksuit. And I remember my aunt – my godmother coming from, um, Florida, and asking me what I wanted for Christmas. And I said this Nike tracksuit. And my mum was like, ‘obviously don’t get him the Nike tracksuit, it’s like £90.’ And she was like, ‘alright, no no no. It’s fine. I won’t – I won’t get

it.' Telling that to my mum and being like, 'I'll get you the tracksuit.'

And then she did get me the tracksuit. And I wore that for about four years. Um, but that was like – I remember when that – when I first saw that and when I started wearing that and then I was like, 'I want more of these.' I just want like the same tracksuit but just loads of them. And like I could get one with my name on the back and I could get – and I remember there was a stage where, um, did you ever have this growing up? Where you could buy the iron-on letters?

KIRI: Yes. Yeah, yeah.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah. So there was a stage where we were going to - me and all my friends were going to the Matalan and getting a tracksuit for like £14 and then ironing on the letters like our MC names.

KIRI: Oh my god.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: No one was doing anything that creative. Also I just love the idea – I imagine it's mainly lads – just knowing how to iron. Like it's such a nice thing.

KIELL: So many people just burning letters off their names.

KIRI: I go by this now. Because I burnt the –

KIELL: Yeah, a lot of that going on.

KIRI: It's amazing to think of a teenage lad like customising stuff as well. It's – it's so joyous to me. Um, any other trends that caught your eye when you were a teen?

KIELL: Um, boiler –

KIRI: What was – what was going – you're a bit younger than me, I think.

KIELL: 32.

KIRI: So what was going on – yeah, oh, well I'm 34, yeah. 35 at the end of the year.

KIELL: Right, it was mostly like – it was, um, it was very influenced by like American hip hop. There was that – that vibe. Um, and there was like big oversized t-shirts and like, uh, big jeans and jackets and caps to the side. But that sort of came and went and then there was more of a grime thing of like Avirex jackets and, um, Akademiks tracksuits. There was this tracksuit called Akademik, which was like massive logos everywhere. Um, and there was also – around the same there was Lot29, which was a lot of, um, Looney Tunes characters swearing.

KIRI: Yeah.

KIELL: A lot of like Bugs Bunny like that. Um –

KIRI: Just Bugs flipping the bird.

KIELL: And for some reason – yeah, and for some reason everyone was like, 'yeah, we need that.' Um, so that – that was really popular. That was my style for a while. But then I think it was – I

was about 14, maybe 15, and there's a video of this on Youtube. Um, and I used to wear – because I used to like switch between all red or like red and blue or red and black.

Um, and I have this video on Youtube where I'm wearing a red Nike hat, a black Nike hoodie, you can't see what I'm wearing on the bottom, but I'm guessing it was probably like my red tracksuit bottoms or something like that. I've got one black glove, one red glove. In my – in my red hat I've got black laces. And they're like in the holes of the hat. I've like put my black laces in and like tied a bow on top of my – my cap. And that is what I used to wear to the youth club and when I'd go and MC.

KIRI: Oh my god, how old were you at this age?

KIELL: I was probably about 14, 15. I mean the pixels on this video, there's – there are eight. There are eight pixels.

KIRI: We'll take your word for it that that's what's going on in it. There's probably like clearer footage of JFK's assassination than there is of that look at the youth club.

KIELL: Absolutely.

KIRI: I would've lost my mind. I would've just thought you were the fucking coolest guy in the world. And I bet everyone did, right? In youth club?

KIELL: A lot of – yeah, everyone was just like, 'oh, he's got his thing.' And people would see things and like – there was this guy in my year at school called Bradley. And he for some reason – he's from an area called Bow. Do you know Bow? Yeah, and for some reason everyone from Bow had a lot of money. And I don't know

why. But everyone – every boy that went to my – because I went to an all boys school – every boy that went to my school that was from Bow had loads of money and had like the best trainers. They all wore kickers instead of like normal – like school shoes. And I – I wore like the £15 shoes that would only last you a term. And then afterwards they're like that.

KIRI: Yeah, Shoe Zone. Yeah.

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. Definitely Shoe Zone. And, um, I remember one time Bradley came in with these Air Force 1s. All red Air Force 1s with a little white love heart on the back. And I was like, 'where did you get those trainers?'

KIRI: Oh my god.

KIELL: And he was like, 'oh yeah, America. My aunt got them.' Because that's what everyone would say when like – when – if you got them from like a market or if you got them from somewhere you don't want to tell someone, wherever it was you'd say, 'my aunt got them from America.'

KIRI: Okay, so that was the equivalent of when people go, 'I've got a girlfriend. She goes to another school.'

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah. But then you could see my dilemma with my red tracksuit, because my aunt – my aunt from America.

KIRI: Isn't your aunt from Florida?

KIELL: Everyone was like, 'yeah, fake, bruv.' I'm like, 'no, man.'

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Just dragging your aunt in and be like, 'show them the passport. Show them the passport.'

KIELL: 'She's got to fly in two hours. I can't be –'

KIRI: Oh my gosh, that's amazing. Well did you rebel then much as a teenager? And if you did rebel, was it – was it showing up in the clothes that you wore?

KIELL: Um, the only rebellion clothes-wise was where – how far down my trousers were on my legs. That was – that was a rebellion. My mum would be like, 'pull your trousers up. What's wrong with you?' And I'd be like [mumbling] 'oh.' And then I'd go outside and pull them down, and I'd be like, 'that – that shows her. I can't run for the bus properly.'

KIRI: That is the reverse of being a girl in my school, where you would roll your skirt up as high as it could.

KIELL: Right, yeah.

KIRI: And so like yeah, the boys I guess would wear – I'd completely forgotten, and it's still – there's still a hangover of that in certain guys, that like wearing jeans below your ass was just how you wore them.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Which is such a weird thing.

KIELL: It's very weird.

KIRI: Like I – I can ask freely now. Like did your bum not get cold?

KIELL: I don't think so. Because well here's another thing. We used to wear tracksuit bottoms under our tracksuit bottoms.

KIRI: Okay, I didn't know that.

KIELL: So you'd have – for some reason, I don't know why, we called them underbottoms and you'd have like some really shit like tracksuit bottoms on underneath your – your bottoms or your jeans. And like thinking back to that now, that is mental. But we would do this all year round. I'm talking like the height of summer, you've got your tracksuit on and underneath your tracksuit you've got another – you've got another pair of tracksuit bottoms, which would have all your like – your like stuff in it.

But also, this – this is – I don't think I've ever spoken about this before like since not doing it. But you'd – you'd go to the chicken and chips shop, and you'd eat your food. And then like you'd probably have a tissue, but by the time you've left, so you've like taken one tissue from the chicken and chips shop, and when you're walking on the street, eating chicken and chips, whatever, and then you would pull down your trousers a little bit and just wipe your hands on your – your bottoms.

KIRI: Was everyone doing this or was it just you that was filthy?

KIELL: Everyone. That was not just me. Everyone was doing it. That was an everyone thing. This was before we knew about like the little wet wipes that they have. That boss man's got the little wet wipes that they've been keeping secret. And everyone used to just do your like – and you'd just have all sorts of shit in your – in your, um, tracksuit pockets as well. Like the inside pockets. And

they'd usually be like zip up ones. And like all the stuff – all your coins, all your keys, or like whatever you were carrying that you weren't supposed to have on you.

KIRI: This is amazing. So these underbottoms were like a handbag, napkin, like thermal trouser that you wore all year round?

KIELL: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: Was this only in your area? Or was this like –

KIELL: I think – I think it was a London thing, but I think it was like the culture that I was in was very – like the grime MC kind of thing and like the fashion reflected that. And I think that that was a – that kind of thing.

KIRI: It's – it's amazing. I absolutely love it. It's so –

KIELL: There was another thing that I've just remembered as well. We used to have – we used to roll up a sock and put the sock in your sock. So it would come – it would be like a bulge here.

KIRI: Okay so I'm just going to describe it to people that you're pointing to like the crease of where your foot meets your ankle at the front.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: So you'd put like a – a balled up sock in your sock there.

KIELL: In your sock. And what that would do is hold up the tongue of your trainer. And so because we were wearing like boot cut jeans, you'd have your – the tongue of your trainer in front of the

jeans. But obviously without the sock your jeans would just cover your shoe completely. So to have the tongue sticking up, you'd put a sock in the sock.

KIRI: Oh my god. So everyone could see that you had good trainers.

KIELL: Yeah, and then you'd put your jeans in between like the bulge of the sock and the tongue.

KIRI: This is so amazing. This is a completely like different world. And I'm here for it. Because the like – the level of effort that you're going in to like produce that look, it's like a fashion house.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: You know when you find out all these tricks of how they make things looks certain ways.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah.

KIRI: It's – that's so great. That's so cool.

KIELL: These are things I haven't spoken about forever. I'm so happy that we're getting to do that.

KIRI: Were you, um, about this time when you're – you're like – got this grime inspired look, is that when the red came in?

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Because I'm – I'm obviously picturing this almost head to toe in red as well.

KIELL: Right, yeah yeah yeah. So that would usually be with my, um, Reebok Workouts. And I'd have – I got those from America when I went to my aunt's. And I had three pairs of Reebok Workouts. And I had a white pair, a black and red pair, and a black – and a red pair. Yeah, white, black and red, and a red. And then I'd have the – I remember – this is specifically a birthday outfit. This was maybe like my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday or maybe – maybe my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. And I had a double denim suit. Like dark denim. I mean shiny. Too shiny. Um, and then – and then my red Reebok Workouts. And then like a red polo shirt. And that was my birthday look. And that was me being like, 'I'm an adult. I'm 17.'

KIRI: That is strong.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: I can legally sell scrap metal.

KIELL: Getting a red – red bottle of Lambrini to match and then just posing for Facebook – MySpace pictures.

KIRI: Do you know what really strikes me about all this is like obviously it's really considered and it's really stylish, but that is to me one of the only things that passes over to how you look now. Because let's talk about your style now, because you are – I always think of you as being like really turned out, really thoughtful, with like way more of like a tailored look. I could never imagine you with like underbottoms and jeans and things like that now.

KIELL: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: Um, so like how did this – the style that we see from you now, when did that appear?

KIELL: Yeah. Um, well I think that I'd always – I'd always matched, always. And like a friend of mine who was in the grime group that I was in, I was in a group called Raw Breed, and he was like the oldest one in the group. And he was always like about the clothes, um, and matching. And he called it – so, no, everyone would call it like dropping. Like are you dropping in – in what you're wearing? Do your clothes drop with each other?

KIRI: Oh, okay.

KIELL: And then he created a thing that was called clumsy. Because he was like, 'because I drop everything. Like there's nothing that I can't drop.' So he was – he was always like – and he used to speak about it in his lyrics about him being like, 'oh, I'm clumsy.' Um, and he – I guess he was my style icon. Because I used to see the things that – I mean he – he had a lot more money than me and we didn't realise until like we got older that he was like – he had a job. Like a proper – proper job. Everyone – everyone just thought that he was just like this guy with loads of money and loads of clothes and like different cars and stuff. He actually had like a proper legit job.

And, um, yeah. I guess he was my style icon. Um, so I – I always wanted to – to sort of dress like him. And the group, I guess, everyone had different style. But we all looked good. We didn't look like the traditional like grime group. We all sort of dressed quite well for like whatever tracksuits and hoodies were. Like however – however well you can dress in sort of like an oversized hoodie.

KIRI: Immediately my imagination is – wants to go, ‘oh, like a girl band.’ In that there’s – everyone’s got a look.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah.

KIRI: And that does elevate you sometimes. That – having that like look. Because you’re dressing –

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah. It’s true because with boy bands it was all like everyone wears the same thing. But I guess with girl bands it was more like individual styles, but everyone looks good.

KIRI: Yeah. That’s – that’s the plan. I – yeah. I’m thinking Spice Girls of course, the – the quintessential iconic girl group.

KIELL: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

KIRI: Aren’t we always always just thinking about the Spice Girls.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: So this – this style then, that’s a bit more I guess – I don’t mean this as like a pejorative, but I guess hoodies and things like that, I do associate as being more like youth skewed.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah.

KIRI: And whereas you do like more tailoring now. So it’s a bit older, I guess.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: But when did you start experimenting with that stuff? It – because it feels like a big leap.

KIELL: I remember being in school and we had – so it was an all boys school. There was an all girl's school around the corner. And it joins at the sixth form. But in the sixth form you wear what you want rather than the uniform. But you wear what you want as in like shirts, ties, blazers, suits and stuff. And I remember from being in like year 10 knowing that I had two years until sixth form, but planning my outfits and knowing exactly what I wanted to wear.

KIRI: Amazing.

KIELL: And for some reason I could not wait to wear black – black blazer, black shirt, black trousers, black shoes, white tie. I could not wait. And I remember I wore that on the second day of sixth form because I thought, 'I'm not going to wear it on the first day.' Because I had spoken about it too much and I felt like other people were going to do it.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: So I was like, 'on the second day I'm going to wear that.' And on the first day I wore pink. A pink, um, shirt and tie and then this like – I mean I only had – I had two sixth form suits and I'd alternate between the two. And one was like black and then one was sort of like a charcoal colour. Um, that was pinstripe. Not – not like, um, not like Buggy Malone or something.

KIRI: Yeah, I was thinking.

KIELL: But like – like the weasels from Who Framed Roger Rabbit. Um, um, yeah. Like a – like a – it was quite nice for them. It – I mean it was massive. It wasn't like fitted, but it was a nice suit. Um, but yeah. On the first day I wore like a pink shirt and pink tie with like some purple bits. Paisley purple bits. And then on the second day I wore that like all black with a white tie. And then I always just wanted to keep that up. But at the time things weren't like – nothing was fitted and everything was just like for the sake of school.

And I did that all the way through the – the two years. And it got to like sort of I'd say the second term of the second year where people started getting lazy with it and just like trying to get away with wearing like a jumper and tracksuit – tracksuit bottoms. Because like it was quite a – it was quite a strict, um, it was a strict school. I mean people used to get sent home for haircuts and things like that. Or if like you weren't wearing shoes, you only had trainers, then you'd get sent home. And all that stuff. And even like after school, if we were – if we left but we were still in school uniform like around the area, we would get – if a teacher saw you with trainers on or a hat on, you'd get a detention. Because of like whilst you're representing the school, you have to be in full school uniform.

So they had like a school hat, but it was a beanie hat with the – the school crest on it. But people were like, 'I'm not going to wear that.' And eventually people started wearing it or would like turn it inside out. Or like trying to make their own style of it. But, um, yeah, I remember being in sixth form and sort of never really wanting to deviate from the smart look, but just like trying different colours and making things match and whatnot. And I'd see things maybe on TV. I remember – I always remember

watching, um, I think it was called Less than Perfect. Do you remember that show?

KIRI: No, I don't know.

KIELL: I think Eric Roberts was in it and Andy Dick and, uh, Patrick Warburton. And Eric Roberts plays like this boss of this sort of media company. And all of his suits were incredible. Like his suits, the – the, um, colours and the cut and everything. And I was like, 'I'm going to get – I'm going to get that colour.' And all – I mean my – my options were Peacock, Primark, or Matalan. But I would always try and like find the best of and – and make a good outfit out of that. And I think I did alright. But then I got like older and I got to like drama school and then I remember like really stressing about what I was going to wear for graduation.

KIRI: Was it the kind of drama school where they make you wear like all black all day? Is it that kind of drama school?

KIELL: No. No no no.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: It was like you do whatever you want, basically.

KIRI: Okay. So when you could do whatever you want in drama school, were you still going for a tailored look? Or were you –

KIELL: Oh, no no no. That was just specifically graduation. But like in drama school on a daily, I – I went through this sort of army look phase.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: And I had like green combat trousers and like the green – you know those green, um, it's sort of – oh man, I'm really bad at describing materials. Um, you know those army jumpers with the, uh –

KIRI: Oh, they've got like epellettes on them? The – almost like what St. John's Ambulance wear but they wear them in black.

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah yeah.

KIRI: So like the ribbed ones? Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

KIELL: Yes, yes, yeah. Exactly those, yeah. Yeah, so I went through a phase of that. And I had like that outfit in like three colours. And then I would wear a lot of, um, I was wearing a lot of cardigans in drama school as well.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: Which was very different to like anyone else from my area. But I went to drama school wanting to be like – I kind of felt – I guess at the time I felt like a bit embarrassed that I was from like an area where everyone dressed sort of – people would look at you and go, 'oh, you've dressed street,' or, 'you've dressed urban.'

KIRI: Really?

KIELL: And I was like, 'I don't want to be like – I don't want to be predictable.' So I was – I started wearing cardigans and things like that. And I – and I'm kind of like – I don't have any cardigans now, but I kind of like – it's not – it's not like I look back at it and go like,

'hm, that's – that's a bit embarrassing.' I'm kind of glad that I went through that phase.

Um, but also I mean no, I say – okay, so in two ways there's like – the cardigans were in in the Funky House era. Funky House was like popular from like 2008 to maybe 2012. And it was the era of mohicans and cardigans. And I forget – and like stripey cardigans. And I've got so many Facebook pictures of that.

And like that – I guess that's where the cardigans came in. But people wore those specifically like to rave. People didn't wear them in their everyday – in everyday life. Um, and there were a lot of venues that around that time were also doing you have to wear like – you had to wear hard shoes because they were associating people that didn't have access to hard shoes or didn't have hard shoes with like, 'okay, they're not the troublemakers because they've got hard shoes.'

KIRI: Wow.

KIELL: Um, so yeah, I guess the cardigan stuff sort of stayed with me there and then I started to wear them in like everyday life. And I – but I remember getting like to the end of the three years, which would've been about – that would've been 2010, and I had a really nice grey suit that I wore to graduation and a, um, a pink shirt and pink tie. Not the same ones from sixth form. Different one. Um, but then in the evening I changed into a – into a polo top. Like a – the same colour pink but a polo top. With the same suit.

KIRI: Oh, great.

KIELL: For my eveningwear. And I think – I think that was probably the first time where I was like, ‘oh, I – I kind of like – I like wearing suits. I kind of like this look.’ So then I always – was always like – and the more of my friends were having like events and – it wasn’t really weddings that – at that stage, it was more sort of like – I mean there were a lot of christenings and no weddings. And the – the young priest would have something to say about that.

[Both laugh]

KIELL: Um, but yeah. Those sort of events and wanting to – like enjoying people commenting on how I looked. And I’m sure that you can relate to that as well.

KIRI: Yeah, it does – it does, um, there was a part – there was, I guess growing up, there was a bit when I would’ve been very self-conscious about anyone commenting on what I wore, even if I was dressing for myself or outlandishly I guess. But now I think it’s – yeah, it’s a nice thing of like – I – yeah, I guess when you – also when you put work into it, like you were. You’re really thinking about what you’re wearing and putting this stuff together and how it’s going to work. So when someone goes, ‘oh, you’ve done a good job of that,’ that’s a really nice thing.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah. Because when did you start – when did you start like – because I imagine not everyone that you’re – where you’re from wears the same things as you.

KIRI: No, I guess, um, uh, I guess in – when I started really liking music, I think.

KIELL: Right.

KIRI: When I – just when you get to that age where you start thinking you're not like other people. So I think when you're a sort of like a teenager. So I was always trying to make myself be like – once I stopped trying to fit in, because I didn't know anyone at the school I was at, I was like, 'okay, I'm going to stand out. That's what I'm going to try and do.'

KIELL: Okay. Okay.

KIRI: So I'm going to have – try and have this and that and yeah. And I think clothes have been weirdly – you would never know to look at my parents now, but they were both very fashionable when they were younger in the 60s.

KIELL: Right.

KIRI: Um, so I think clothes – so when they dressed up they looked amazing. But they just – because they're farmers, they didn't dress up really.

KIELL: Right.

KIRI: So yeah, I think I kind of became aware of it then. But I – it's really interesting to me that you were doing this thing of like this grime scene and then this formal wear, which I love, for the sixth form is so cool. And everyone else dropped off and you were like, 'no, no, I'm going to – I'm going to wear these suits.' And then the drama school thing. So – so when you were talking about the cardigans and stuff for that, is that you second-guessing or responding to how people were seeing you and I mean I guess profiling you?

KIELL: Yeah, yeah. Definitely. Yeah.

KIRI: And going, 'okay, I'm not what you think I am'?

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Or – or was it that you were made to feel – would you have felt uncomfortable dressing in a way that they expected?

KIELL: Um, I don't – hm, I don't know. I don't think it was fear of feeling uncomfortable. I think it was just wanting to sort of change – not meet people's expectations, I think. I mean and there was no – there was no specific moment or thing that made me go, 'no, actually, I'm going to do this.' But I feel like I – what I – I remember the first day of drama school and realising like one, there are probably about eight people from London here and there's like three black people in my year.

KIRI: Wow.

KIELL: And me realising like that the way that I spoke and interacted with people in my whole life, at like school and sixth form and all of that, if I did that people wouldn't understand. Literally wouldn't understand me.

KIRI: Really?

KIELL: And – and not in terms of like oh, they didn't understand where I was coming from. Like literally couldn't understand the way that I was speaking.

KIRI: Wow.

KIELL: So – and that was always like my biggest note in – in drama school. About my, uh, diction and, um, my pronunciation and all those things. Um, so that changed gradually throughout, um, drama school. And I think that that – in doing that, and I guess there was probably a bit of rebellion, but it didn't come out in any specific way. But I felt like maybe I was rebelling by like being like, 'well you think I'm this but I'm not. You think I'm this because I sound like this but I'm actually not because I've got this cardigan.' So – so I think that that might've been something to do with it. Subconsciously.

KIRI: Hm, that's – that's really interesting. And then did you get a thing where, um, when you go back to like your friends and family, they see a difference in you in the – how – way you speak or how you dress?

KIELL: Oh yeah, definitely. Yeah yeah yeah.

KIRI: They comment on it?

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. I remember – because my cousin – so this is a weird thing. My – that guy that I was talking to you about that I said that is probably my fashion icon, who was in – who was sort of that – he was – no one ever said that he was, but he was the like leader of this crew. This grime crew. And maybe because he was the oldest, maybe because he was the most like organised or whatnot. And that's probably because he had a job.

Um, but he – he, um, introduced – when I was maybe – when I was – this was the last day of my GCSEs. So I was 16. And he – we – he took me and some of the others to go and film this thing for a DVD. Because everyone wanted to be on DVDs then. That's how you'd like, uh, get seen as a grime – seen by like loads of people.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: Everyone wanted to be on a DVD. And we went and filmed this thing and then he was like, 'oh, I should introduce you to this guy, like you and him would really get on.' And we went to this park in Beckton, and we were waiting for this guy. And whilst we were there, someone started walking towards us. And I was like, 'that's my cousin.' And he was like, 'what, him?' I said, 'yeah.' He was like, 'this is who I was talking about.'

And I hadn't seen him for like maybe – maybe like six or seven years, just because he was like quite – his dad and my mum are brother and sister, but they're very, very different. And he was like allowed to fucking drive cars or some shit. And he like – he could do what he wanted at 12, whereas like I had to be home like five minutes after the bell rang at school. And he – I saw – I remember like meeting him then. And then we would hang out quite a lot from like 16 to 18. But then at 18 he went to jail. And then came out after I'd finished drama school. So we'd like written to each other and stuff.

KIRI: Wow.

KIELL: But hadn't really – because he'd only get a few phone calls and then he was closer to other friends than he was to me even though like we're family or whatever, but when he came out of jail, he was like, 'why do you talk like that?'

KIRI: Really?

KIELL: And I – and I was like, 'what do you mean?' And he was like, 'well – well those words, like you sound posh.' And that was from

like going to drama school and changing – and I think – I mean it’s definitely for the better in terms of, uh, like actually, like practically for the job that I do I’d need to be able to be understood. Like I need to have clarity.

KIRI: Okay, yeah.

KIELL: So obviously – so I – it was definitely for the better. But then I think that I also learnt that I could do both at the same time, or I could have it on and off when I needed to. And I’d never – and people call it code switching. I – but I never – I never had to before I went to drama school.

KIRI: That’s interesting.

KIELL: Um, because I was always around the same people. Um, so then yeah. I think like the fashion element was my way of still like having a person – having my own – my actual thing that I liked. Rather than like – than this like new voice that I’ve put on.

KIRI: Oh, that’s so interesting. So your – your clothes, I guess, retaining some of your authenticity and like who – who you are, then. Wow.

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, deffo. But the thing – me and my cousin had very, very similar dress sense. I – like yeah, yeah. In terms – I think everything. Like he’s very thoughtful about what he wears. Um, and will – I mean he’s so shit on the internet. And this is such a mad thing to say in 2021, but like he’ll screenshot something from a music video and be like, ‘how do I get this?’ Not knowing you can just google like ‘blue jumper with angel logo.’ He’ll send it to me like, ‘how do I get this?’ And I’ll just find it and first thing he’s going to be like, ‘oh, you do that – like the way you do that’s

sick.’ And then every time I do it I’m like, ‘why have I done that instead of just telling him how to do that?’ Because every time he’s going to do it. And it’s a bit like ten years of him just sending me like stuff going, ‘how do I get this?’

KIRI: Yeah, I think – I think he’s just smart, right? He’s just got someone else who’ll do it for him.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: It’s not that he hasn’t worked it out. He’s like, ‘oh, that idiot will go and find it for me and save me some time.’

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah.

[Both laugh]

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Do you think of – because of our job, do you think of hair and makeup and accessories as part of the outfit?

KIELL: I do, yeah. But I have, uh, unfortunately got to the stage where there’s not much I can do with my hair.

KIRI: It’s done now. This is it.

KIELL: I – yes. It’s done. It’s completed. Um, if – like I – it grew a lot in lockdown, but it hasn’t grown all the places I want it to grow. And the front is kind of a little... so pre-Turkey, there’s not much I can do in terms of – in terms of making the hair part of the, um, the outfit. But – and I also – I guess with accessories as well, um, with men there’s a – there’s less. I think there are less

accessories to add to your thing. And I guess there are like – there's jewellery. Um, but there's not really like... a headband. I mean I've seen a few men rock a headband.

KIRI: You know one of the things I've seen in the last few years while I've really appreciated is boys wearing – I would call it a – a handbag. But, you know, it's a cross bag that goes over you?

KIELL: Oh yeah yeah yeah. I've got one of them.

KIRI: The – yeah.

KIELL: I've got two of them.

KIRI: The very trendy men have leant into the handbag.

KIELL: I've got two of them. I've got the – the, um, the pouch kind of thing.

KIRI: Oh, so like a bum bag you wear over across? Yeah yeah.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah. I've got a black one and a white one, just in case.

KIRI: Do you – it sounds like if you like something you'll get it in multiple colours.

KIELL: Yes. Yeah yeah yeah.

KIRI: Love it. That's –

KIELL: Because I also have my – my don'ts.

KIRI: Okay, which are?

KIELL: And there are – there's quite a few of them. Um, one of my don'ts that is that – the only one that has been like a big don't for me that I'm sort of leaning towards now is pink and red.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: Um –

KIRI: I saw a beautiful dress recently in pink and red and I was like, 'what are rules?' I didn't get it, but I nearly did.

KIELL: Yeah, I – that's the one thing that I'm like, 'no.' But then I'll see someone else wearing it – wearing it and I'll be like, 'that actually really works.'

KIRI: Yeah, that's the thing, isn't it? When you see someone else and you're like, 'god damn you. I wish I had your – your confidence slash foresight.' Um, okay, well then is there a – because I feel like you are very like on-trend. But are there any trends that you've tried to pull off and it's not happening? It doesn't work for you?

KIELL: I don't think cropped trousers works for me. Ghosts was nominated for a Sky Arts award and, um, I went to the, uh, ceremony. And I wore a pink blazer, like double breasted like, uh, checked pink blazer. And some beigey brown, um, trousers. But they're cropped trousers. And my feet are quite big.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: I'm size 11.

KIRI: Yeah, they are big.

KIELL: So that has to come into consideration every time I get dressed. And I feel like cropped trousers and big feet doesn't work. And that was the first – that was the first pair of cropped trousers I've ever worn. And that – when I look at the pictures I'm like – there – there are actually some of the pictures that I'm like, 'oh, I'm not too bad.' But there's like – some angles I'm like, 'nah.'

KIRI: Is it a case of the angles? That like good dead on from the front, but from the size full Krusty the clown?

KIELL: The other way, actually.

KIRI: Interesting. Okay.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Good to know.

KIELL: On that specific, um, look. But I've never – that's the first pair of cropped trousers I've ever had. Um, it will be the last.

KIRI: And obviously I now want to see the picture of that.

KIELL: I'll get that over to you.

KIRI: Um, do you hang onto clothes? Or do you turn over stuff? Do you get rid? Do you get rid?

KIELL: I hang onto them a lot. Um –

KIRI: Great. What's your oldest item of clothing then, do you reckon?

KIELL: Oh wow. Um, I've got a t-shirt. I've got two t-shirts made by a guy that I went to sixth form with. Um, his name's CJ and he has a company called The Ugly Kids Club. And his, um, he's really successful now. And that's not why I've kept it, just to prove that I know him. But, um, he had a – these range of, um, t-shirts and I've got a grey one and a black one. And that I've had since sixth form, which is probably like 17.

KIRI: Oh my god, amazing.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: You're like me then. Proper hoarder.

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah. Big time.

KIRI: Really hang onto stuff. Do you do vintage? Are you in – into vintage stuff?

KIELL: I am. So Tash, uh, Natasha Dimitri showed me a website – an app – called Get? No.

KIRI: Isn't that a taxi service?

KIELL: Yeah, definitely is a taxi service. Um, it's called Gem. G-E-M. Um, and she showed me that and there's another one called Grailed. And there are a lot of like – you can basically just search anything and it'll come up from – and in whatever – wherever it is on the internet, it will show you. It will take you to the link to buy it.

KIRI: Oh my god. That sounds incredible. I'm writing it down right now.

KIELL: Yeah, like after she showed me that I was on it for two weeks. And I bought a jacket. I bought a bomber jacket. Um, that's where – also where I bought the green, um, tie and pocket square. Um, from their website. Because they're Burberry. Um, but I got them for less than Burberry prices, um, because it's vintage. But, um, yeah. I got a lot of stuff on there. I spent too much money on there.

KIRI: That is such a good tip. That is brilliant. I know people listening to this will be like immediately googling it and trying to find it.

KIELL: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: Thank you so much for that, via Tash. Um, so is there – thinking about vintage, is there a time in fashion – is there an era that you wished you were around in just for the clothes?

KIELL: Um, I feel like when I look at like rat pack era, I really – I like the look of it, but I also feel like it's a bit boring.

KIRI: Interesting.

KIELL: Because everyone was in the same like colours and there wasn't – there wasn't much –

KIRI: But is that because you're looking at a black and white picture, babe?

KIELL: Oh. Oh, right, right, right.

[Both laugh]

KIELL: 'Why is everyone's suit grey?' Um, I feel like yeah, I feel like they're all like – it was all tuxes. And this is one thing that I'm – whenever I look at awards shows and stuff, I'm like, 'I would never wear a tux.' Because everyone else in the room is wearing a tux. My worst fear is going into – 'my worst fear' is going into like – going to a thing and someone's wearing exactly the same thing as me.

KIRI: Really?

KIELL: And at these like awards shows, like, um –

KIRI: Mine's breast cancer. [laughs]

KIELL: Why? Imagine someone's wearing exactly the same top!  
Um –

KIRI: No, I agree with you. That would – I would feel really embarrassed to be in something even very similar to someone else. I would feel very self-conscious.

KIELL: Yeah. I remember going to – when I was in Ibiza, and I was wearing this, um, watermelon shirt. I don't know if you've seen my holiday shirts, but there's a range.

KIRI: I haven't.

KIELL: Really? You'd like them.

KIRI: Yeah, I'm going to have to check them out.

KIELL: Yeah, you'd like them. Um, I've got – I had this watermelon shirt and I – I was so like – I was just so proud of this shirt I had on because I just felt like it was – you know, like people like us, we wear a lot of things that are like different to what other people wear.

KIRI: Yeah.

KIELL: And I think you more than me. Um, but you are used to people commenting on it. And you know that when – there's certain outfits when you put them together, people are going to be like, 'you look nice.'

KIRI: Yeah.

KIELL: And you prepare yourself for that mentally.

KIRI: Yeah, sure.

KIELL: And – and this was one of those – this was one of those days. And I was like, 'this is a fucking nice shirt and people are going to say that.' And I went to, um, Amnesia in Ibiza. Have you ever been to Amnesia?

KIRI: I haven't been, no.

KIELL: It's massive. It's like – because they have super clubs there, so it's like 10,000 people. And within the first ten minutes, I bump into someone wearing exactly the same shirt as me.

KIRI: Oh my god.

KIELL: And I was – I looked at him and he was like, ‘nice shirt.’ And I said, ‘one of us is going to have to go home.’

KIRI: Um, I really want to hear more about the shirts. So what – you were saying watermelon like we should all know what that is. Does – is that – does it like start green and go pink? Is it changing like that?

KIELL: No, no, no, it’s got watermelons on it.

KIRI: Oh, okay. Right. Okay.

KIELL: Yeah, so it’s like – it’s like – it’s black – it’s not silk, it’s probably like – what’s the fake version of silk? Satin?

KIRI: Satin. Yeah.

KIELL: Yeah. Satin and it’s got green and pink watermelons on it.

KIRI: It does sound nice.

KIELL: It is nice.

KIRI: I hope he went home.

KIELL: He did. He – he did. I was – I was very forceful about it.

[Both laugh]

KIELL: Um – yeah.

KIRI: So you’ve told me which era you don’t want to exist in.

KIELL: Oh, yeah yeah yeah. Oh yeah yeah. Um, maybe if I had my own money in the 90s, um, and I could dress like LL Cool J.

KIRI: Amazing.

KIELL: Yeah. I think then.

KIRI: That is such a good choice that no one's ever done before. But you're right. It's – and it's about having money as well, isn't it?

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Like that is an era that you needed money to look good in.

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah. Because I was around for the 90s but I didn't have no money. My mum – my mum looked after that.

KIRI: Yeah. Um, have you got an item of clothing that you put on and you just instantly feel brilliant in it?

KIELL: I spent quite a bit of money on a leather jacket maybe two years ago. Because I had one before but it was from like Topman or something and it lasted maybe like a year and then it started like – bits started coming off. Um, and then I went and bought one from All Saints. Um, and it was – it was a pricey purchase, but it's definitely worth it because I still – it still feels brand new when I put it on.

KIRI: That's the thing with like, um, leather jackets, is if you do invest – the theory is you would just have it 30 years later.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: And also good – good leather, when it distresses it looks amazing as well. So it is a once in a lifetime purchase.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: So a wise way to spend your money. Um, what is your relationship like with shopping then? Obviously you've given us the great tip of the app, but are you online or do you actually like being in a shop and trying things on and picking things up?

KIELL: I do – I like trying things on. Okay, so I'm going to start trying to answer this question and then I'm going to forget what the question was and then I'll ask it again or whatever.

KIRI: Okay, no worries.

KIELL: I'm going to start with I don't have a mirror in my house.

KIRI: What?

KIELL: Not that – I'm not a vampire. I – I don't – we've got a small like circle mirror, like sort of head height. Um, not that small. It's sort of like you can get – you can get your full head and shoulders in it.

KIRI: Okay. Sure.

KIELL: Um, and that is next to the bathroom. In the – in my bathroom I've got a mirror on the cabinet. On the cabinet door. Um, and that is it. I don't have a mirror in my room.

KIRI: I can't – I –

KIELL: And I don't have a mirror – we don't have a full length anywhere.

KIRI: I cannot get over this. There's at least two mirrors in every room of my house.

KIELL: Really? I've –

KIRI: Yeah, in rooms that we don't – like spare rooms. Spare bedrooms. Like there's at least – at least two mirrors. I'm mentally going through it now. And there's at least two mirrors in every single room. Even – oh, not the kitchen. But every other room's got at least two mirrors in it.

KIELL: Right. I don't have that. So what I have – what I've been doing recently is when I order clothes I try them on and then go to the lift.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Sure, okay. Yeah.

KIELL: So I spend quite a lot of time – like I get a new bunch of things from Asos or wherever I've ordered from, and try it on, go to the lift, press the left, it comes, opens, I look and it and I'm like, 'yeah.' Oh, actually is that the – 'Look up, door's closed. Press it again. 'Ah, someone's in it.' Um, so I understand that I probably should get a mirror, but also where the hell would I put it? Um, because the place is full of, uh, tequila.

KIRI: Surely you have a wall. You have a wall somewhere you can put a long mirror on.

KIELL: Not really, no. I don't – I don't think I do. I mean we've got like – there are walls but then there's stuff like that, like this radiator is the full length of, um –

KIRI: Oh, yeah.

KIELL: And then the rest of it is just window.

KIRI: I mean that is probably like –

KIELL: Which is a mirror of sorts.

KIRI: Fancy flat living is that you – you have no room for an actual mirror and you have to use the communal lift.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: That is so – mate, that is so funny. I can just imagine you walking backwards and forwards.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Oh my god, what a – that's – also fair fucks for putting together such great outfits and not being able to actually see yourself while you do it.

KIELL: Yeah. So I tweeted – yeah, I tweeted about that I had like – I don't know what I – sometimes I don't know what I look like until I've left. Um, but on the odd occasion that I don't like it, that adds to my lateness.

KIRI: Oh, so sometimes you'll get to the lift and you'll be like, 'uh-uh.'

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: 'I wish I had a mirror.' And you'll have to go back and change the socks, change everything.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Amazing.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: So – so you shop online a bit then.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Obviously there's the stress that comes with it. So do you prefer being in a shop then? Because you can actually look in the mirror?

KIELL: Yeah, I do like – do you know what I like? And a lot of people don't like this and I'm – I'm going to get a lot of stick, I'll have to say on this – but I like a TKMaxx.

KIRI: I live for a TKMaxx. I absolutely love it. I love a TKMaxx.

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah, I really do. And a lot of people don't. Namely Emily Lloyd Saini. She, um, famously hates TKMaxx because she can't deal with all the textures together.

KIRI: Really?

KIELL: Too many different textures next to each other, apparently. What a loser.

KIRI: I love Emily. I think she's an exceptionally talented, really funny, really brilliant woman. But I'm going to have to message her about this because she's fucking high, quite frankly.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: What? The textures?

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: The fact that it's the – the brilliant comedian Harriet Dyer, um, referred to it as a corporate jumble sale and it is the best description ever of it.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: To me it's just like a posh charity shop. A charity shop where you know everything's going to be good and not everything's going to have a gravy stain on it.

KIELL: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: That's how I feel about it. So you're a bit TKMaxx fan.

KIELL: Yes.

KIRI: And – and do you think about when you're – when you're buying stuff, do you think about – because I've just started to feel incredibly aware and guilty about the carbon footprint of clothes

and things like that. So I'm trying to like invest in stuff more and buy more sustainably. Uh, is that something that you think about? And there's no – obviously there's no like, 'or are you a piece of shit?' It's just a question.

KIELL: Um, it's – it's not. However, Charlotte Ritchie has told me a lot about its importance. And has changed the way that I have done some things. And I – and she made me – she didn't make me, she influenced me to buy, um, bamboo pillows.

KIRI: Okay.

KIELL: And she's right, they are really comfortable.

KIRI: Well that's the most important thing.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: You buy some new stuff so it's really comfortable.

KIELL: Yeah. Um, yeah. Um, but she said some – something about sustainability and I bought some bamboo pillows.

KIRI: Love it. There we go.

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: Um, I wanted to ask you if you – are you ever into like – I know you like vintage, but like charity shops? How do you feel about them? I want to know, basically, the best thing you've found either from a vintage shop or like thrifted, secondhand, that kind of gem that you have.

KIELL: Right. I mean the reason I love a charity shop is because – and, uh, similarly to TKMaxx, is because I feel like there’s more of a chance that I can get something that no one else has gone.

KIRI: Exactly mine. Exactly the same as me.

KIELL: Yeah, I – like I’ll always have a browse in a charity shop. But why do all charity shop clothes smell exactly the same? What is that smell?

KIRI: Um, I don’t know. I think it’s a – I think it’s a – a mixture of like a musty house and yeah, like I think it’s musty house, I think it’s like mothballs, I think it’s sweat.

KIELL: Yeah, mothballs.

KIRI: And then I think it’s Febreeze. So it all mixes together and it makes that distinct like tang that you get when you walk in a charity shop.

KIELL: Yeah, yeah. Because I’m like, ‘I – I love everything about this apart from the aroma.’ Because like – and it’s not like, ‘oh, the person that – that had this item is a piece of shit.’ It’s like every – every item everywhere smells exactly the same. Like this.

KIRI: Yeah. You’re – you’re so right as well. It’s not a smell, it is an aroma. That’s like the perfect word for it.

KIELL: Yeah.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: So your style how it is now, which is like I say very put together, a really great line in tailoring, do you see it evolving? Do you think you'll, I mean, you'll go back to the under bottoms?

KIELL: Absolutely never.

KIRI: Or do you think that this is – you've kind of got it down now? This is – you can see yourself dressing like this when you're like in your 80s?

KIELL: Yeah, I think I've found my thing and that's me. Um, and I wish that I could – I wish I had a like – a name for my style. If I have a – like I wish someone could say, 'oh, you dress like a dadada.' And I'd be like, 'oh, yeah.' But I just – I don't really know what it is. Do you have? Do you have a –

KIRI: No, I think drag queen is as close as it gets. I don't think there is either, yeah. Because it – I'm not sort of like – definitely not chic, it's definitely – I guess camp is maybe.

KIELL: Right.

KIRI: But yeah, it is very hard to describe your own style if you don't fit into something that's like, 'oh, it's like, you know, Parisian dadada. Or 1940s.'

KIELL: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah.

KIRI: Or, you know, like an era or a genre. Whereas if you're just like me where it's a – like a little bit of everything that catches your eye, often physically because it's shiny.

KIELL: Yeah.

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

KIELL: Do you know what I love? I really love? And like I google maybe twice a week? Is wool – woollen – I google these two things because they are – apparently are the same thing. A zip-up cardigan.

KIRI: Okay, yeah.

KIELL: And a – a woolly bomber.

KIRI: Oh, okay. I wouldn't have said they're the same thing.

KIELL: Apparently. Google – google says that they're the same thing. And like – so it's kind of like this that I've got on, which is like a – I don't know what it is. Like a zip-up jumper. Um, but like a woolly one. And not like big woolly but like thin wool.

KIRI: Yeah, thin wool – yeah, like a light sweater. Like a light – yeah.

KIELL: Yeah. But zip-up one. And I want – I've got one that I love. And I got it from River Island. And when – when I tell people it's from River Island no one ever believes me. Because it looks – it looks very designer and also it doesn't look like anything River Island would do. It's got like a massive butterfly, um, no, it's a wasp. Uh, like a massive wasp, um, uh, it – it would be – it would be like a patch if it wasn't so big.

KIRI: Oh, so it's like, um, appliqué or embroidered on it?

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah yeah.

KIRI: Wow.

KIELL: Um, massive. And that is – is sort of like orange rust. Like a rusty orange colour. And I love it. And I tried to find more like that all the time and I can't.

KIRI: That is amazing. You should just search for that exact thing on Ebay. That – if I find something that I love and I've, you know, like it's two, three years later, I'm like, 'just search for it endlessly on Ebay and it will – it will appear.' I mean you're likely spending too much for it.

KIELL: Yeah. Yeah, I'm going to look for that. But I think – I think that'll be my vibe forever. Like as – as many of those as I can find, I'll just keep getting them.

KIRI: I love it. It's such a niche, slightly weird thing to be like, 'oh, I'll be wearing this forever.'

KIELL: Yeah.

KIRI: A zip-up, very thin sweatshirt with a wasp on from River Island.

KIELL: Yeah.

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

KIELL: Um, I'll tell you what I can't get into. I don't know if this is the same question, but I cannot get into Crocs.

KIRI: Yes. I've had this conversation with someone recently. I totally agree. People I know – Suzi Ruffel did this podcast and then put up a picture of her in Crocs and I had to send her a voice note being like, 'Suzie, I'm pulling you from the podcast, obviously.' Yeah, I can't – even when people have like floral ones or leopard print ones or whatever, I'm like – I just can't do it.

KIELL: No.

KIRI: My line is – so this is someone else's, unless you're a gardener or a nurse, there's absolutely no reason for you to be in Crocs.

KIELL: I don't understand how they can be comfortable. People are like, 'oh, but they're so comfortable.' How? They're rubber. What – how can they be comfortable? Slippers are comfortable. I'll tell you what's comfortable. Fake Uggs. They're comfortable. That's what I've got. Two pairs.

KIRI: [laughs] Fuggs. Just a pair of Fuggs around the house.

KIELL: Fuggs. Yeah.

KIRI: Pop the Fuggs on, walk to the lift, check yourself in the mirror, go back again.

KIELL: Yeah.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Um, okay, final question now. It's a very sad day, Kiell. Very sad. You have passed over to the other side. Um, you're being

buried, cremated. Whichever one. What are you – what are you wearing? What's your final outfit?

KIELL: Oh, wow. I've got a blazer that is, uh, the pattern? No, not the pattern. The – the blazer is roses.

KIRI: Oh, the – the print.

KIELL: Print. Print. The print is roses.

KIRI: Red?

KIELL: Red.

KIRI: Of course.

KIELL: Um, that, white shirt, bowtie.

KIRI: Love it.

KIELL: Um –

KIRI: What colour's the bowtie, please?

KIELL: I think – I think like a suede black.

KIRI: Ooh, yes please.

KIELL: Yeah. Um, uh, like tuxedo trousers. And Fuggs. One Fugg, one Croc.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Oh my god, it's such a good outfit. It's genuinely great.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Kiell Smith-Bynoe there. No mirror. What is happening? I cannot believe he looks so sharp with no mirror in the house. Um, also those trips to the lifts to use the mirror. What a bougie life hack that is. Um, do you know what? The other thing is with Kiell, weirdly I feel like he is the person I resonated with most in terms of dressing. Because I'm very like – you know how he picks his socks and then goes the whole outfit and – and dresses by colour?

That is so similar to how I do it. And that's why I wear sequins. It's like, 'oh, it's a uniform.' As long as I – I've always just got to wear sequins. And like I said in that thing in sixth form, I'd pick a colour and I found it less overwhelming that way, I think because of, I don't know, maybe my being neurodiverse and having ADHD, maybe it makes it all a bit chaotic especially when you have lots of things. So that kind of paring back and letting the colour or the item decide things for you, that just resonates with me so much. It's very, very similar to me. Um, obviously I don't look as brilliant as he does, though. Comes out very differently on me.

Um, we've just got one message this week because it is a beautiful and very long one, um, that we have permission to share. So Katrina sent us this message on Instagram.

She says, 'Hi Kiri, I'm loving the pod. I never really thought about how much fashion and clothes meant to my identity until very recently, and your podcast has helped me so much to understand why. I'm queer and my gender expression is all over the shop in the best kind of way. I've always loved clothes and being able to

express myself. I would say that my wardrobe is camp, femme, masc, and full of whimsy.’ Babes, it sounds absolutely amazing.

Um, they say, ‘over lockdown, um, we’re still in one here in Melbourne, my body changed a lot. I’ve gone from a UK size 18 to a size 4 and it is a weird feeling. Fashion has opened up to me more, but I also feel like the way I express myself has really been thrown into chaos. I’ve found that my gender expression has grown and changed too and I’m more comfortable shopping in the men’s section now. I have vivid memories of horrible shopping experiences, but your podcast has helped me to see that clothing can be fun again.

I’ve been having so much fun on Facebook marketplace.’ Oh my god, I love Facebook marketplace. ‘And buy, sell, swap groups selling my old clothes and finding new gems. I feel excited to get dressed again in the morning and the love of clothes has returned to my life. I still get nervous that people are going to comment on my body when I see friends after all this time locked away at home, and I’ll look like society wants me to, and yet that has not at all equated to any excess health or happiness.

I’m loving hearing the experiences your guests have had with clothing. I especially love the episodes with Rosie Jones and Travis Alabanza. Hearing about queer and disabled experiences has really helped me to see that there are so many ways to express yourself. And it’s okay to love how you look without being overly vain. I love my queerness and I love that I can incorporate that into my closet. So thank you for giving a platform to this valuable conversation.

I’ve always felt like fashion was too girly for me, and your podcast is shifting that. And I’m now happy to say that I do have an

interest in fashion. And that's not vain or girly. Everyone wears clothes and makes fashion choices every single day.

I adore the body positivity in your podcast. And though it's a tough topic, I think it would be great to hear from someone who's tried to navigate the world of clothes with an eating disorder. Would also love a guest who sees fashion as practical as well as fun. My hush puppy explorer sandals deserve as much love as my sparkly pink heeled boots.'

Well Katrina, bang on the money then. I totally agree. And I think you're going to love next week's episode, which is with Sofie Hagen, um, who is, uh, who covers so much of what you've talked about. It's a really interesting chat about how Sophie's queerness intersects with being plus size and – and being lots of different sizes as well.

But I will take that on board. We're just putting together season two's guests now. Um, so yeah, if there's – of course if there's anyone who's happy to talk about those things – and I think – think some of the people we are, um, and have spoken to sort of navigate that as well. I'm so glad that you're enjoying it.

I know myself, I – a little while ago I – I lost a lot of weight and, um, I found that so – and I talked very openly with Sofie about it. Sofie has been brilliant actually. About the – how difficult it was to navigate suddenly being in a body – and I never went – I think I was like at my smallest was, um, a 12-14. And probably a size 16 in Topshop. Um, but it's just this weird currency that you get handed when your body changed. When your body shrinks. When you make – when you make yourself smaller.

And I wasn't prepared for it and I also wasn't prepared for the scrutiny. And I found it really hard and people sort of praise you for it and I – I hated it. It made me so self-conscious about my body and, um, yeah, I – I found it really difficult to navigate, even though weirdly shopping should be on paper 'easier' in inverted commas, there was so much other stuff that came with it. It took quite a lot of work to I guess realign my head. Um, because I just felt like the same person, except I was getting all this mad attention.

And yeah, and – and then I just got so scared about putting on weight again. Which, trust me babes, I have. Um, but yeah. It – it suddenly became like consuming. I was thinking about my weight far more than when I was heavier, which is not – not the way I wanted it to be at all. So I know how this stuff can affect you and just throw everything into a doubt. Into sort of disarray and doubt. And – and added to that that you're sort of I guess exploring or – or realigning or just, um, accepting, I guess, your gender expression.

It – it must be a tough time, but I really am so proud and glad that the podcast is – is helping you in any way. And I promise I'm just going to get out as many conversations that I think will help different people from all over the world in different bodies and navigating different conversations. So thank you so much for getting in contact. It's a beautiful message.

Um, you can write to us at [whoyouwearingpod@gmail.com](mailto:whoyouwearingpod@gmail.com). Um, you can follow us @whoyouwearingpod on the gram, where we'll throw up photos of the people we've been chatting to and clips and things like that. And you can always message us on there.

Now, I'm just got time to sing about an indie business that I absolutely love, and I think it works with Kiell's love of vintage and accessories. So it is Bow & Crossbones. So Bow & Crossbones make reproduction vintage accessories in Fakelite, which is like Bakelite but not real. Um, and it came about because, um, the owner/ founder Cam just loves vintage and couldn't find the banging accessories that she wanted and, let's face it, deserved.

So Bow & Crossbones sort of covers 40s to 70s reproduction pieces and they are so beautiful and well-made. Their bangles as well come in a variety of sizes, because I know people with very tiny wrists or bigger wrists find it hard to find vintage that – that fits them. Um, don't worry about that. There's a great diagram on the website as well. I've got some of their broaches, actually, and they always get compliments. Um, and at the end of the day, isn't that what we're all after? After me being like, 'please don't talk about me when I lose weight,' being like, 'give me a compliment though.'

Now I was snooping around their website to write up about them, um, and the – in the About Me section the owner Cam has written this great bit that made me love the company even more, so I'm going to read it out wholesale.

It says, 'when we posted about Black Lives Matter, we spoke Cam's truth as a woman of colour and business owner. We've been thinking a lot about that truth and we feel we need to speak another truth. Caring about BLM, the lives of Transgender people, the broader LGBTQIA community and the environment shouldn't need to be shouted about – caring about humans should be a given. That said, we are in full support of the Trans Community. We are in full support of the LGBTQIA Community. We are in full support of Black Lives Matter.'

We are in full support of improving the environment.  
We are in full support of all bodies deserving to feel fabulous.  
In short we are in full support of helping to build a society which is fair and equitable for the whole planet and everyone on it.'

Oh my gosh, I just love it. I mean that statement, it feels like a given, right? But it isn't. And in today's climate, um, I think if we only spent our money with companies that were committed to equality and looking after our people and planet, we would live in a much nicer world. So if you're looking for some stunning accessories from a business that wears their morals on their sleeve, um, on their – on their lapel with a gorgeous brooch to go with it, please go and seek out Bow & Crossbones.

We will be back next Monday and I'm chatting to, as I mentioned, stand-up comedian and the person I know who rocks a robe the hardest, it is Sofie Hagen. See you then.

[Upbeat electronic music]

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