

Who Are You Wearing – Miquita Oliver

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN: There's the sort of soothing sounds of a storm that you might be able to enjoy on this intro. Um, hello and welcome to the first episode of the second series of Who Are You Wearing. Who Are You Wearing is a podcast where I, Kiri Pritchard-McLean, stand-up comedian and clothes perv, chat to the most stylish folk I know about their journey with clothes, style, and fashion.

We are kicking off series two with an absolute corker of an episode as I'm chatting to the incredibly stylish presenter and journalist, Miquita Oliver. Clothes go deep for Miquita, and this is a really special episode, especially if you are a charity shop fangirl like me. Her enthusiasm for clothes, and especially secondhand clothes, is so contagious.

I really identified with her struggle with her identity in and out of school. Now I haven't spoken about that much before because I truly feel mad when I do, so it was a really lovely, liberating chat for me to have with someone else who felt like they were one thing at school and another thing with their friends outside of school or another thing at home. Yeah, I'm – then maybe when you have that conversation with someone else you think, 'well, maybe other people might have experienced this as well,' so get in touch if you wanted to chat about that because yeah, it certainly rang some bells for me.

This conversation was recorded in November 2021. I'm in my cupboard, as usual, in Wales, and Miquita was at home in London. Settle in for this one. She's so generous with her time and so enthusiastic and interesting, um, this is a really great podcast. Um, settle in and enjoy me asking Miquita Oliver, 'who are you wearing?'

MIQUITA OLIVER: I think people feel like when they're talking about clothes they can't get deep. But it's very deep, clothes. It's what we put on everyday and it's how we express ourselves, and I think when I see pictures of myself really young now, like four, five, and six, my mum was in control and she loved a sort of ladybird separate. So I was in a lot of cardigans, a lot of little skirts. Basically what I wear now, I realised. Uh, little stripey jumpers, little skirt but then like red tights and like red shoes.

She was – but then she told me recently a lot of that was me. But I remember the thing that really impacted me was being nine and I – this is so weird to think of. I wore a boiler suit. A navy kind of workman's boiler suit with trainers. And I just remember going to school and going, 'I feel really attractive today,' and all the boys chased me around the playground all afternoon. And I was like, 'there's something powerful in this boiler suit.' And it's – it wasn't sexy, and I was only – sorry, I was probably more like ten. But I think it was me knowing what I felt good in and then of course that always makes you more attractive, even at ten. I think I felt really good in it. And I did – and I didn't know why, but I was like, 'love this. Love this thing.' And I wore it all the time.

KIRI: That's so cool. Of course the boys could've just been really after a plumber.

MIQUITA: Yeah, they probably thought I was just there to do some service.

KIRI: But I think we're about the same age and I feel like a boiler suit, that was like – that was a strong look back then. Like that's quite an unusual choice to make.

MIQUITA: Yeah, what was it? It was probably '95 and I think I had just got into grunge. I had just got into Nirvana a little bit. And I think

also my mum knew the guy who worked at Maharishi and I think that we had a kids boiler suit from that – from that like lying around. I did not go seeking it out. It was like in the house. And it fit me perfectly but it was quite baggy. But yeah, I remember – I wasn't aware of whether it was a look at that time or whether people were wearing them. I was only ten. But I definitely thought, 'I feel good in this.' Which is, you know, a powerful moment in clothes, when you realise how good they can make you feel.

KIRI: Totally. So you're a ten year old who's into grunge, and those outfits that you see beforehand, turns out you had a hand in them anyway. It feels like from the get go you've had an idea about, you know, your style.

MIQUITA: Yeah, big time. Yeah, I guess I did. I guess I did. I've never really been – I was in my early 20s, but at this time of course I wasn't really into fashion, but I've always been interested in clothes, um, the, um, things that people wear. I have always been interested in style. Personal style and the choices we make and why. And I think the – the minute I liked music, so Jade, SWV, Boyz II Men, at eight, my first thing was like, 'well, what should I wear? What will I be wearing?' I was very attracted to what they wore. And they looked good, Kiri. They were in like DMs –

KIRI: So good.

MIQUITA: Lumberjack shirts, dungarees, oversized cut-offs. I was like, 'this is' – and actually interestingly it was a black R&B, American R&B culture, uh, style. But then when I moved into loving grunge I was like, 'it's all the same clothes.' Like lumberjack shirts, baggy jeans, DMs. So I think I was always into that particular look for a long time no matter what my music taste did.

KIRI: Yes, that's so cool.

MIQUITA: Which is quite a vibe for a – eight to – eight to eleven, to know that that's what you're into.

KIRI: It really is, because most other people are just wearing what they're kind of told to wear and not really – and if they're putting together stuff it's just like the – 'oh, these are my most comfortable jeans and I like that football shirt,' do you know what I mean?

MIQUITA: Yeah. But at ten aren't you like – one is like desperate to feel things. And, you know, you weren't – you're not going out yet, you're not snogging boys yet, maybe, and I feel like it was – the only way to have fun was to like dress yourself up. But I was also brought up around a lot of brilliant maverick women – my grandmother, my mother, and all my aunties. And they all had very clear identities and very clear personal style. And I think osmosis was at play and I was fed quite a powerful message. Because all my cousins are the same. Everyone has very personal style. And I think we were told very early, whether we were told verbally or just by the vibe around us, that that – you could do that and it was fun and important to who you were.

KIRI: Yeah, well who was – who was dressing you, then? So was it – were you getting influences – I can see obviously there's pop culture coming in there and you've got these examples of like your mum and your aunties. but like is it cousins? Is it – you know, like – or is it all coming from you?

MIQUITA: I think the, um, Mum was really dressing me. Basically it started with my nan because my nan wears – all her clothes are from charity shops. So from that age, so from birth, I was just told that that was just – it wasn't a lesser option. It wasn't another way to live. It was the way we lived. And, you know, we were all poor and skint and lived in unbelievably the best secondhand place in the world, which was Portobello. So I didn't ever see secondhand clothes as a secondary thing. They were celebrated, useful, and all around. And

then I think by the time we got into our teens yes, me and my cousin Nama and my cousin Phoebe – we were all – and no, still, we all have very individual style, but we were all a little pack of like, ‘we like grunge. Okay, now we like hip-hop. Okay, now we –’ you know what I mean? But yeah, I was – we all still dressed very differently, I realise. Yeah. Always right little individuals. I quite like that.

KIRI: Well during this stage, then, of growing up and – and being influenced by your nan and things like that, were you ever made to wear an item of clothing that you hated?

MIQUITA: No. No.

KIRI: That’s amazing.

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: You’re one of only like – one other person has said that. Everyone else is like, ‘oh god, yeah, I can tell you.’ And you’re like, ‘no, I’ve always loved everything.’

MIQUITA: No, even when we were five, we were bridesmaid at my Auntie Nana’s wedding and she let us design our own dresses, which was so fun.

KIRI: What?

MIQUITA: Yeah, we did it on like this – I remember the computer, and we had to like put the sleeves on it. And then it was like – I made a pink bubblegum meringue nightmare, but I has designed it. I was very pleased with the arm shape, you know what I mean? So yeah, no, I’ve never really been put in anything I didn’t want to wear. Wow.

KIRI: That’s amazing.

MIQUITA: I don't know how they – I don't know – I don't know how we managed that.

KIRI: Well did you have, um, when you were growing up, did you have a particular outfit or item of clothing that you would have to be like surgically removed from?

MIQUITA: Yeah, I was pretty, pretty connected to my shell suit at one point.

[Both laugh]

KIRI: Tell us about the shell suit.

MIQUITA: Oh, it was dark green and turquoise and just the right bagginess on the legs. And I just thought I was a cool motherfucker when I put it on. I was like, 'this is what being cool feels like.' And I remember there were a few things Mum was like, 'you can't wear your shell suit to that,' and I didn't like that. I was like, 'why not?' and I think Nanny was like, 'you can't wear your shell suit everyday,' and I was like, 'why not?' So yeah, that – I probably would've had a proper fight if I was told to not wear that shell suit. Would I wear a shell suit now? Yeah, I think I would.

KIRI: Yeah, do you know what? I – I've seen a couple of people who look incredible in sort of like 1980s ski suits.

MIQUITA: Yeah, I love all those. And the colours. Like the pinks and the whites. It was always a nice colourway on a shell suit. But I think they were highly flammable or some shit. There was –

KIRI: Yeah. You can't smoke in them. It's just a fact.

MIQUITA: It's like you can't be near an open flame but you look great.

KIRI: No bonfire night displays if you're wearing a shell suit.

MIQUITA: Yeah, right. Right. But I will look into shell suits. You've just reminded me of them. Like a good C&A's shell suit.

KIRI: Yeah. They are – they are great. They are very cool.

MIQUITA: Ugh, I miss C&A.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: So when you were growing up as a teenager, there was lots of trends going on. Um, were there any that you indulged in? Or did you just – was that all happening adjacent to what you were doing and cracking on with?

MIQUITA: This was actually quite an important – that's a really important question of my life particularly because, uh, when I discovered Nirvana and grunge music in general is because we went and had a summer in – my cousin Phoebe and I – in Spain, at my Auntie – same Auntie who let me design my wedding dress – at in her house in Spain with all my cousins. And we had a big old summer there. And there were two friends visiting from New York called Willy and Cheyenne. And they were so cool. They were 15 and we were 12 or 11. And they were just committed to grunge and dressed it, lived it, breathed it. And I just wanted to know everything.

Um, and then when I came back to London I started secondary school and was like, 'woo, I'll wear my army camos, my purple DMs, I've got my purple – I used to have plaits, just like now. But I dyed them purple with Kool Aid. Another story. And then I thought I'd be the most popular chick in school. And it was an issue because I was

black and all the black kids were like, 'why are you dressing like a dirty hippie?' And all the white kids were just confused, I think. And actually – and it was at a time in the 90s in London – I went to Holland Park school, where, uh, no one was dressing like that. Not even white kids.

KIRI: Wow.

MIQUITA: Everyone was dressing like rude boys and rude girls. So it was – it was a real weird thing where I had to go, 'do I stick to this or do I conform?' And I was only 11, but I remember going, 'okay, I'll conform.' And I did about a month where I got a bomber jacket and a pair of leggings and I was like, 'okay.' And I just hated it. I didn't feel like myself. So I decided to be a dirty hippie and I got bullied badly for about three years.

I actually went to lots of different schools. And one school was a uniform. And I sort of pretended that I was a rude girl, and then at the weekends I would wear my flares and go and visit my real friends. And I was so scared about someone from school seeing me. Like properly nervous. So it became this like – deciding to stick to your own identity became quite a big decision in my life and something that sometimes I felt like I had to keep a secret. And sometimes I felt like I had to stand up for even if it caused me to get bullied for years. So again, I think clothes became a really important part of identity for me around then. Sort of 11 to 14.

KIRI: That is weirdly almost exactly the same experience of when I moved up to secondary school, um, I would dress in my flares that I made like, you know, out of like 70s tea towels I'd found, like you'd cut out jeans and put the panel in.

MIQUITA: Oh my god, wicked.

KIRI: And then in school to stop – to try and assimilate and fit into this massive state school, going from a weird little private school that was sort of like – hippies ran.

MIQUITA: Right.

KIRI: Um, I would wear sports clothes and talk differently to – to avoid getting like – it's so similar. And I just had this double life. And I was like I could never introduce the friends to each other.

MIQUITA: No.

KIRI: And I felt like I was myself on the weekends and then someone else in school.

MIQUITA: Totally. And it was like living in fear of like, 'what if anyone saw me?' And then I think someone did see me once and went, 'Miquita, I swear I saw you in like some like big bell trousers,' and I was like, 'that wasn't me. That wasn't me. That wasn't me.' And I remember thinking like – it's not that you thought you'd get beaten up or anything, you just thought you'd be – you'd be exposed. And – and that's how important clothes are. That's how important they can be. I'm happy you went through that as well. It was a really stressful time.

KIRI: Yeah. It's so stressful, yeah. Because also there's a bit where I'm like, 'well, I –' just being in school and – and being there for so many hours and being like on trying to be someone else for – as an act of, I guess, self-preservation, and also I found it really hard to go from a tiny school where everyone knew me to being in a year of 200 in a school of 1000. I was just like, 'oh, god.' And I needed like validation.

MIQUITA: Yes. That's what Hollard Park was. It was – I remember there were 1500 students and I'd just come from Spain where I'd gone to school for a few months. And I was just like, 'I can't handle

this.' It's like being thrown into the masses and you have to decide whether you want to become part of the masses or stay as an individual. And I think we both probably stayed as individuals.

KIRI: Yeah, but secretly.

MIQUITA: But secretly.

KIRI: Did you have a rebellious phase as a teenager, then? And if so, was it showing in your – in your clothes?

MIQUITA: Uh, yes I did and yes it was. So then when we were 14 – no, god. 13? 14. We discovered squat parties. Um, I was desperate to party when I was a kid. I was desperate to smoke weed, I was desperate to go out and dance and rave. I just wanted to live it up. Because my parents were those kind of people so I was just ready to be an adult and do what they did. 14 is a bit young.

Um, but then we discovered squat parties and we were like, 'what is this?' And, you know, squat parties, anything went. And they were – so funny, they were dirty and in old warehouses and, you know, deeply illegal and some dodgy shit going on. But there was still a real fashion scene there. It was like parachute trousers, um, crop tops, sometimes – there was one phase where we all got dummies, eek. Um, I know. Oh dear.

And, uh, and I remember no matter how, you know, kind of, you know, wasted everyone was getting or however crazy and hectic it was, it was still very important to me what I wore to every squat party and to my cousins and my friends. So there was a real hierarchal nature to it as well. So we all started wearing parachute trousers, um, Maharishi, little jackets, kind of – we looked pretty good, I have to say, Kiri. We were cool.

And then my cousin went into the squat party life of it even further because she fell in love with like a, um, a traveller who was part of the scene and really immersed herself in that scene. So – and then that reflected in her clothes. It became a lot more like – yeah, traveller wear. Like sort of like, um, you know, like tracksuits and it was – I don't know, it was – it was interesting to see how the lifestyle of what you've decided to do starts to be reflected in what you're wearing. I knew, Nama, we'd lost her a bit because she stopped wearing parachute trousers, is what I'm trying to say. I was like, 'hm, you've gone somewhere else.'

So I think it's interesting that even in an environment like that which is so reckless and hedonistic, clothes are still really important to where you see yourself in that world and how you progress through it.

KIRI: Yeah. And were you – were you the youngest at stuff like that?

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: Or was it – was it a pretty broad range of –

MIQUITA: I mean they were dodgy. There was some ten year olds there and people brought their kids and stuff, but also as the like – yeah, we were definitely the younger ravers, yeah. It was far – far too young, to be honest. I can't believe it.

KIRI: But I'm just thinking of like did you also go and like – like would you kind of catch on – were there very stylish people that you're like, 'that, that's the kind of look that I'm going to go for'?

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: Were they those people as well as, you know, pop culture? Was this – this squat scene influencing your dress as well ?

MIQUITA: Big – yeah, big time. You’d go to parties and – and this is what I mean, parties had real hierarchal nature. So yeah, all the girls – and there was a girl called Nina, been in and out of care, you know, had a really hard life. But all I thought was, ‘god, her hair’s beautiful and I love her blue eyes and I love the way she dresses.’ And it’s like she’s really been through some shit, you know, that life – that – that scene had a lot of darkness in it, um, but for us it was still – we were teenagers and it was still our new social scene. And it was important to be accepted in it. So I wanted to look like Nina. So I gradually just got a big dirtier and dirtier.

And then it – and then it got more intense. Like it was like, ‘are you going to get dreads or are you going to shave your head?’ And I got dreads and my friend called Delia shaved her head. And, you know, we were in the scene. But then about a year later I got Popworld and I was like, ‘I have to get rid of these dreads. Like I can’t have dreadlocks on TV.’ And, um, yeah, painstakingly cut them all off and had to get a weave and ugh, it was awful. I always wished I’d just kept my dreads but it was – the minute I wasn’t in that scene, everything about the way I looked I suddenly was like, ‘I have to get rid of this.’

I actually started going to, um, Chelsea a bit and started trying to wear heels, bless me. And sort of dresses and coats and trying to be like out – in the town at 15. But I was so confused by it all because I’d been in squat parties for three years as my social scene, so I was – that was my most confused time of dressing. I didn’t really know what I was up to.

KIRI: Wow, that’s so interesting. What a, um, I mean as well it doesn’t feel like a smooth transition. It feels like a handbrake turn into a completely different world.

MIQUITA: Yeah, because when you're at squat parties you don't live in the real world, you know? You – you sort of – you're just waiting for the weekend and then that weekend you get so lost in this crazy world and then sort of go back to school on Monday like, 'ugh,' and then you just get ready to come back to squat parties. So to really leave that scene and come back into the world was quite a difficult time for me and I didn't really know who I was. And I didn't really know what I wanted to wear. Which is weird because I always know what I want to wear, you know what I mean? I knew I was lost because I didn't know what I wanted to put on.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: So your style now, which I think – because you've been so well-known to so many of us from a young age.

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: So we've seen like your style journey.

MIQUITA: I know.

KIRI: Um, because – because the – no, but I – none of it is – I just – when my agent saw your name in my diary she was like, 'oh my god, will you please just tell her she's always been consistently brilliantly stylish?' I was like, 'I'll pass it on. Yeah.' Um –

MIQUITA: Oh, that is so nice. That is so nice. Thanks.

KIRI: But you're – normally I ask people here, 'so what age did the style that you have now start showing up in?' But I feel like – do you think the – the seeds of that were always there in Popworld? Or is it a – is it a much later thing? Because I feel like they're quite distinct, your – that – that era and how are now.

MIQUITA: Yeah. Yeah. Well we celebrated Popworld, um, 20 years of Popworld in January. Um, uh, and so Simon and I did a bit – quite a bit of press about it and had to look at a lot of old Popworld stuff. And, uh, I was like, ‘oh my god, I’m just in charity shop clothes. This is not a new thing.’ It was literally like – I could see what I was wearing. I was like, ‘oh my god, that’s from Portobello. That’s that skirt I nicked from Nama. There’s those boots that I –’

So it’s always been there, Kiri. Like always. I don’t think – the way I dress, I suppose, has evolved somewhat. But I’ve always been the master over my own creation as it were. Like I’ve always liked to put things together myself because of what – what things I’m feeling and interested in at that time. Because it was like a big TV show and I think they did offer me a few stylists but I was like, ‘absolutely not.’ I don’t think I’ve ever been – liked being told what to wear. Ever.

KIRI: And – and would it take some of the fun out of it for you?

MIQUITA: Yes, absolutely. Yeah yeah yeah. Everything that’s happened recently, um, you know, was – was – what was it? I – I suppose it was when I did – started Steph’s show this time last year on Channel 4, and I thought, ‘okay, first studio show I’ve done in a while,’ and I thought, ‘oh, I’m going to wear that dress that I got from Ridley market the other day for four quid.’ And I wore it and I thought, ‘this is so much more fun, like just wearing –’

because I had a period of time on – sort of after T4 when I was doing bits and bobs and I was wearing a lot of Zara. And I had a stylist and it was a lot of Zara and Topshop. And then it was fine, but I just didn’t have as much fun. And in this I was like, ‘I’m going to have some fun.’ And then I was like after how I felt in it that day, I thought, ‘I’m not going to wear any clothes that aren’t charity shop clothes. That’s actually a really fun challenge for me.’

And then by like week eight people were really responding to it. And I suddenly thought, 'this is actually really important because it takes secondhand clothes out of this sphere of, um, where they can be worn.' It's like if I can wear them on telly I think we can wear them anywhere. It's only secondhand clothes, we're not talking about rubbish bags. So I – it was really important for me to show secondhand clothes in all their beauty and all their glamour and everything they can be and how stylish they can be and chic and classic. And for me at the time – of course throughout the year it made me realise how – how in love I really am with secondhand clothes and – and that way of living. It's been really – it's been a part forever, since day.

KIRI: As someone who also deeply loves charity shops, um, like profoundly – I'd say they're my first true and longest lasting love.

MIQUITA: Aw, me too. Me too.

KIRI: I honestly get like a – do you know what my worst thing is? When I'm like gigging, I'm on tour or something, and I'll go into a town and I'll drive past a shop knowing that I'm going to do a gig and I'm not staying over and I can see a closed charity shop that I already want like six things in the window. I can just tell it's going to be good because it's an animal one and they've not got their shit together.

MIQUITA: Oh my god. Exactly. Like give me a dirty Salvation Army any day over a Traid. I mean Traid's fine, but I – I like the jumble sale ones. I like – oh, I love an RSPCA. But I'm – I'm like you where I'm filming in South at the moment and we keep going down this road and I keep going to the driver, 'please sir, what is this road called?' Because there's three in a row and they're just like the good ones. You know, the good ones. The good ones.

KIRI: Yeah. Oh my god, I love it so much.

MIQUITA: I was like, 'I've got to come back. I've got to come back.' But I think also it's, um, because I've had to discuss it so much recently instead of just it being the way I shop, I've had to really think about it. And I think that there – there are a few elements that are key to it, which is stories – I love stories and I always have. Um, I love feeling that I've worn something on telly that was worn, I don't know, to like some sister's wedding in the 80s in like Hull. Like who knows?

And I love the idea that you have to trust your gut and your instinct, you know? There's not seven tops in – it's not like when you go in like a certain shop and it's like, 'I need polo neck' and there's one in every colour. With charity shops you have to see – you have to be drawn to something and you don't know why. Because you haven't been told to. Because it's in the mini skirt section or the bla bla section. You just – you go with your gut, and I think that's a really important way to live and to shop.

KIRI: Yeah, and it's also nice to take the kind of pressure off of like just – just the idea of like browsing, it brings back the fun of it.

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: Because also when I go into like a high street shop – and all this is being very aware that like I'm – although I'm plus sized I can still shop in most high street shops. I understand that actually if you're plus sized, shopping in charity shops is a nightmare. But when I walk into a high street shop, I have to go, 'what of all these thousands of things in here that other people have, which is something I don't like –'

MIQUITA: Exactly.

KIRI: 'How does this work with my body?' And it so often is like it doesn't. Whereas in a charity shop it'll be like it's – it's part of the

adventure of finding something. And I think there's a – it just feels like joyous.

MIQUITA: Totally. Totally. There's, um, uh, last week it was my cousin's birthday, um, and she's bigger than me. She's not big but she's not – she would not think that there's stuff for her in a charity shop. And she was saying, 'I don't want to go out and go to plus size shops.' And I said, 'let's go to charity shops.' And we found her, um, a black cardigan with cherries on it. But it, you know, because it wasn't high street it was cool and not like a naff print. And we were like – I said, 'no, let's get that because it will on you be shrunken and tight and actually look really cute.'

And it was so banging on her. And when we looked at it it was a size 10. If she had gone to a high street shop looking for a size 14 or 16 that she believes she is and not a size ten, then she wouldn't have found something that actually looks so much more banging on her. It – it kind of forces you to look at it from another angle, as you said, and be braver and more courageous, which I understand is not how everyone feels every time they want to go shopping.

But I know that that is an issue, people feel that there aren't bigger clothes in charity shops. And I have to say it's not as true as you think. It really isn't. It really isn't. I've dressed a lot of different people from charity shops. I make a point any shoot we do in a charity shop, I try and get the cameraman a shirt, the sound guy, the runner, just to show the – the breadth of it. Um, I see some nice dresses that are too big for me but I – like I know girls that these would fit with boobs and bums, but they would never go in a charity shop. So I want – I want to try and dispel that myth more with some of the new work I'm doing.

KIRI: Yeah. And also I think that it's so weird. People always say to me, 'oh, I never have any luck.' And I'm like so many charity shops I'll go in and not find anything. It's like TKMaxx. You've just got to keep

going. And then you don't go, 'oh, I went in TKMaxx once and never got anything.' You remember that one time that you got a bag in.

MIQUITA: No. Yeah, totally. There's a blue flower dress that I got from the RSPCA, uh, in Stokey that I wore to my dad's picnic. And I was just thinking it's the – probably my favourite thing I've ever found in my life. And every time I go past the shop I remember that moment. And I go in and I go, 'nothing as good as the blue dress,' but I still like – I'll be back because one day there could be. Because you gave me that blue dress once. You know what I mean? And it was £5. £5. And it is the – one of the favourite things of – in my wardrobe, I would say. Yeah, probably. Love it.

KIRI: I have that as well. I have a deep – some charity shops that I like got – I got this amazing, uh, like mad 80s wide cowboy belt with loads of chains hanging off it and a huge like sort of porcelain painted thing with a horse's head on. It was wild.

MIQUITA: Love it.

KIRI: That I got from a charity shop. I've been back to that charity shop I'd say 50 times since. Never got anything but because I got the belt from there I'll always check.

MIQUITA: Always check. It's like, 'I found magic here once. Let me go back. Let me go back.' Zara I'm like traumatically scarred. Like I just feel like it's not a fun experience anymore. I think I – I think we all know too much. We all know too much, you know what I mean?

KIRI: Yeah, I think that's a really good way of putting it.

MIQUITA: Too much about the dark underbelly, it's like the glamour's gone. And the fun's gone.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: Do you think of hair and makeup as part of your outfit as well?

MIQUITA: Yes. Big time. I – I'm never really that – I don't like to be too neat, as you can see. Um, uh, for instance like I – I plait my hair myself, but because I'm so busy at the moment, my lovely friend Shekina comes and does it and she's always like – oh, it was nice and neat. I'm like, Shekina, no, she's like, 'don't worry, I'll make you look like you've been dragged through a bush. I'll fucking rough it – rough it out for you.' Because I just – I've never liked to be – I – I like to be, hm, scruffy with my hair. Neat with my makeup. And neat with my clothes. So yeah. Yeah.

But I never wear makeup unless I'm working, so I think clothes for me are much more powerful. I've never felt the same affiliation, uh, or affinity for makeup at all. Makeup I associate with work. But hair, big one for me. Actually we just, um, can I talk about this? Yeah. Um, we just, uh, Mum and I have just finished filming in the Caribbean. And we went to a Rasta camp and they wrapped my hair like –

KIRI: Oh, wow.

MIQUITA: Put it up and then wrapped it in fabric. And so I had a whole day, Kiri, of not having my hair. Which I've realised I associate with my femininity so much. Like I – the way I move with it, I'm always doing this. Uh, if I have a date I'm like, 'oh, should I wear it down or up?' It's a huge part of me feeling sexy and beautiful, I realised. So to have it gone for the whole day, which was like a long ass day of filming, I realised that actually it was quite freeing. And I had to look into sort of another part of myself that feels sexy and powerful and beautiful, which is of course your mind. And I don't know, I felt odd, but it felt new. Yeah, it was good. It was really interesting for me.

KIRI: It sounds amazing. Would you – do you think you would do that more then?

MIQUITA: Yes, I'm going to start wrapping my hair for certain work things. And, uh, I did an interview the other day and they said, 'what do you think you'll be wearing when you're 60?' And I was like, 'ooh, I'm going to wrap my hair with silk shirts.' That's like – it kind of opened my eyes up to where I'm headed. Yes, I'd love to become a – a beautiful Rasta in my later age.

KIRI: That's – that's the evolved Pokémon form.

MIQUITA: Yes. Oh, I see how, Kiri, now I do. I mean it's really – it's really fun to think about what you'll dress like when you're older, like 60 and 70. I'd never been asked it before.

KIRI: Yeah, do you ever do something – I do this. I buy something and I go, 'I could – I can wear that when I'm 80.' And I get really excited.

MIQUITA: Mhm. Yeah. I've got silk shirts that are coming with me to my old age. Big time. Big time. And that's why I like charity shops, because a lot of those shirts are probably from 80 year old women being passed down. It's just that lovely cyclical nature of feeling like you're part of a movement in the world that feels good and looks great. It's just a bloody no-brainer.

KIRI: Yeah. Yeah, I – yeah, totally agree.

MIQUITA: Where do you live?

KIRI: I live in North Wales, where there's brilliant charity shops.

MIQUITA: I bet there is. I bet there is. Okay.

KIRI: The – the further away – do you know what, actually? You're someone I can talk about this in depth with. The only thing I've noticed, so – so the shitter charity shops are better because they – they're – it tends to be where old people get rid of their stuff and that's the stuff I'm after. Um, but I've noticed since fast fashion has really taken a hold, some charity – I've been less successful in charity shops because it's lots of like, you know –

MIQUITA: Asos.

KIRI: Boohoo.

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: And – yeah, and I know it won't last and it's not very – the fit isn't very good on it. And I just, um, yeah.

MIQUITA: I'm with you. That – I find that dispiriting, I have to say. I hope that it's – sometimes it makes me feel that, 'oh, it's because everyone's throwing their fast fashion away.' Um, but yes. I find it really like a blockage when it's just Topshop, H&M, Boohoo, you know? Uh, what – what's that Primark one? Atmosphere. I'm like, 'oh god. Oh, this isn't good.' But I'm like you, I'm looking for a weird old lady brand. I'm looking for like a weird Italian, uh, I – do you – you know what I mean. Like that weird – when you get the label and you're like, 'what is this weird French place that I've never heard of?' Like that's what I'm looking for. That's what I want.

KIRI: Absolutely.

MIQUITA: I'm not really looking for designer gems. You know when people go, 'I love charity shops. You can find Gucci,' I'm not looking for that stuff. I'm looking for C&A and old – old lady brands. And ladybird one day, one day.

KIRI: No. No, I totally agree, that's – and also Marks – uh, St. Michael, when Marks & Spencer's was still St. Michael.

MIQUITA: Oh, 100%. I just got a purple dress, um, I love that you understand that distinction. That's so huge. St. Michael's the best. It's like, 'ah, it's not even M&S.' Uh, yeah, I got a – I got a really nice purple dress from there with a belt and buttons all up and I got it taken up to crazy short because I love short. And it was like suddenly this huge – hugely modern, elegant dress that I wore to host something the other day. And I was like, 'that was a fiver St. Michael.' So I'm into that.

KIRI: Yeah. Are you adapting a lot of the stuff you get, then? Do you – do you have a tailor that you take stuff to?

MIQUITA: Well I – I'm a real – a real advocate for dry cleaners because I've got a load of really brilliant dry cleaners around here that are just like – my girl, my girl Sev up the road. I take her stuff and she's – and I'm like, 'can we take the arms off? Can we take this skirt up?' Now she's just like, 'how short do you want the skirt?' I'm like, 'alright.' But she – she said to me the other day, 'god, you properly awakened my design, um, passion again.' She said, 'I used to always be designing and doing things. I haven't done it for years.' So I was like, 'well I'd rather take it to Sev and get it shortened for a fiver than get some tailor to piss about with it.'

But there are some things, um, that I do get this brilliant company called Make New to, um, to tailor for me because they just may be the more expensive pieces and stuff that I want more intricate stuff done – like if you want things taken in, that's a little bit more than taken up or taken off, so I mix it around. But go to your dry cleaners, because half of them are tailors.

KIRI: Yeah. Yeah. It's a great – that's a big like hidden gem secret that is like, 'psst, those people – those people you take your coats to like once every two years, they're really skilled. Use them.'

MIQUITA: Yeah, they're really skilled and it's a dying art. So like let's support them. With the new work that I'm doing with – around secondhand, I really want to make that a part of it. I think it's – it would be such a shame if we lost like old school dry cleaners on the corner.

KIRI: There's an episode of this that I'll send you when it's out that you'd really love with a – a woman who converts stuff and she's incredible.

MIQUITA: Oh, yes please.

KIRI: Um, are there any trends that you've repeatedly tried to pull off but it's just not happening?

MIQUITA: Well. No. Because –

KIRI: You're looking at the pile of clothes next to you.

[Both laugh]

MIQUITA: I'm just thinking – I don't think so, because I don't really like trends. Um, and I suppose the trends – no, if anything they were just some trends and I'm like, 'what?' Like I really don't like a, um, those genie trousers. What are they called? Those sort of like – they're not parachute trousers, they're like something else. And they were –

KIRI: Hareem trousers? Hareem pants.

MIQUITA: Harem trousers. Harem pants. They were around in – Topshop got really excited about those at one point, and I was like, ‘this is not a vibe.’ And I really – I don’t like a playsuit. I’m really not a fan of a playsuit. I used to love dungarees but I haven’t rocked that in a while. No, I don’t think so. Not because like there’s no trend I can’t pull off, it – more just because I don’t really go towards trends anymore. No. I don’t really look at them like that.

KIRI: Okay, that’s good. That’s a really good answer. Any items of clothing, then, that you’re like, ‘lord knows I’ve tried’? Because I can’t pull off a halter – I’ve got massive tits and quite broad shoulders, so in a halter neck I’d just look wild. Like there’s like a tit sat down by my waist, another one much higher up, and like really beefy shoulders. And I always wanted to wear a halter neck. Yeah.

MIQUITA: Oh my god. Oh no, that – it’s so awful when there’s something you yearn to wear and you feel like you can’t. I bet you do look fucking banging in a halter neck, though. Let me think. Hmm. Oh, well you know what I really went off, actually? I really went off dresses. Because when I was, um, because you know, I’ve – I’ve lost quite a lot of weight in the last three years, um, but for ten years before that, sort of in between T4 and – and three years previously to now, um, I was about two stone heavier. Maybe even like three at – at one point.

And the work I was doing, I felt so uncomfortable and I didn’t want to be on camera. I hated my hair. And I just felt horrible. And my stylist at the time would put me in lots of dresses, because they sort of fix the problem quickly. ‘Stick her in a dress, stick her in a dress.’ So by the time I lost weight, and worked bloody hard to lose a lot of weight, I was like, ‘I’m wearing skirts and tops. I want to wear separates, okay?’

And my mum and I always talk about it because we’re both, you know, we train really – she’s also lost a lot of weight in the last few

years and we train bloody hard together and we really look after each other in it. And she was like, ‘people always go, “oh, now you’ve lost weight, what do you want to wear? Like a dress?”’ And it’s like, ‘you don’t get it. All I want to do is wear jeans and a t-shirt.’ Because when I was bigger I felt like I could never just pull on a pair of jeans or pull on a pair of a – pull on a t-shirt. I was always stuck in dresses. So I turned against dresses for a while recently. But, um, I’m just getting back into them, which is quite fun. But for a while I was like, ‘ugh, dresses.’ It’s triggering, you know? The thing you wore a lot when you felt like shit is never fun.

KIRI: Yeah. It’s weird. Yeah. I can tell when I don’t feel good about my body because I start wearing – I – colour goes out and I start wearing loads of black again.

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: Because when I think about when I was very unhappy about my body it was loads and loads of black and I can tell when I’m – even when I haven’t realised myself yet that I’m not comfortable – because I’m just – like I think most people, my weight fluctuates.

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: And, you know, there’s times that I’m happier and there’s times when I’m thinner and I’m actually less happy. So there’s, you know, there is a happy point. Um, but yeah, the colour goes, is the first thing. Is a – is a warning flag for me.

MIQUITA: And I think that’s a really important thing with clothes. It’s like you can look at them to figure out where your head’s at. Like your – I had a, you know, sort of terrible day yesterday, and I looked down, I was in like a sort of jogger – jogging bottoms – pair of jogging bottoms I don’t usually wear and a weird t-shirt I don’t usually wear, and I was in these weird walking boots that I’ve been wearing to

walk my dog, because I'm dog sitting for my parents. And yeah, I was like, 'I don't feel like myself today. I don't feel like myself today.' And I could feel myself slipping into, 'oh, I'll just –'

But and then – for instance, the difference is between what I was wearing yesterday and this, even though it's just a big red jumper, this is my confident jumper. Like this is the jumper I built my career back in, you know what I mean? It's like – it doesn't – it's not about the fact that it's a baggy jumper. It's what piece of clothing it is. And I realised how quickly it is that my clothes can put me in a weird head state again, actually. I realised it doesn't take much and I think that's why I think so carefully about what I wear now, because a lot of clothes are triggering to different times in your life when you were really, really going through some stuff. So I can't really wear leggings. And I like leggings, but they mess with my head. They remind me of being unemployed. I'm like, 'no no no. No no no.'

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: What's the item of clothing that you've had for the longest and you still absolutely love?

MIQUITA: Do you know what? It's so ridiculous, but I do love it, I've got to be honest. It's a, um, blue t-shirt from Ridley Road market, which is a – from the one pound man. But it's such – it's such a nice blue. And I've had it for probably about 20 years. And it's just the perfect thinness now. And I've never not had a good day or night in it. So I just love it. I love it. And it's not special to anyone but me. And it's – I know that and it goes back to the boiler suit. Because whenever I wear it, I feel really attractive and people are attracted to me or, you know, I – I feel quite magnetisey.

And that's because of how I feel in the thin one pound blue t-shirt. So I think that means a lot more to me than a dress that would've cost 300 quid – not that I really have anything like that. Um, I think it

means a lot more to me the way something makes me feel, and that t-shirt just does it every time. Every time. And he doesn't have them anymore. They're all long now. Where this was like perfect crop to the – to the belly button.

KIRI: Is there an era that you wish you existed in just for the fashion?

MIQUITA: 70s, yeah. I'm really interested in how people – what – like everyday denim and, uh, sort of nights out. Different kind of, uh, parts of England. Like I want to know how people dressed on a night out in the 70s in like Sheffield. Like that's what I'm interested in. because that's just story, story, story, isn't it? And I think the 70s – I ask my mum and my dad all the time and they say like everything was just greyer. Everything was actually greyer. London was a greyer place. It actually was. Um, the buildings, the weather, all of it.

And I think style, personal style, definitely in my family, my parents, oh, I just think they were going – they were just flexing in the late 70s, early 80s. So I would've loved to have been around that. And – and, you know, no Instagram. No social media. I mean that is dressing for oneself at that time. Such freedom and such power. And, you know, my parents were punks, so what they wore was important to who they were and where they were in their life. And everyone squatted so no one had any money, so of course the charity shops was where you'd go. My uncle Sean used to wear like – just like beautiful sort of Armani suits that he'd find and then battered up old trainers and he was just – just gorgeous. Just – just what style. What style.

KIRI: I – I adore the 70s as well. My – there's some great pictures of my parents just looking like – because my parents are farmers and always been quite involved in – well, Dad's a mechanic and Mum's a farmer. So they're quite agricultural people.

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: Grew up in Wales as well. And my dad – there's a picture of like my mum holding a pony at some county show. She's got these incredible sort of like wild, uh, trousers that are sort of like a – a kick flare with sort of, um, stripes down them and like a massive jumper.

MIQUITA: Yes.

KIRI: And she's – she's holding a pony and my dad's next to her in a pair of turquoise flares and a – and a big sort of pointy collared thing. And I'm like, 'what is going on here? You're fucking amazing.'

MIQUITA: What is going on? And they're like, 'it's just Wednesday.' It's like, okay. I love that. I love that. And it's just individuality all over the bloody shop.

KIRI: Yeah, it's amazing. And the clothes. I've still got shirts of my dad's from the 70s and they're still great. Just even high street stuff was made in much – in much better quality to last.

MIQUITA: Yes, that is true. Even the high street then was brilliant. Um, you're so lucky. My mum doesn't have any of her clothes. I'm like, 'where's that?' And she's like, 'who knows?' She didn't keep anything for me. Nothing. But my nan's got stuff for me. Yeah.

KIRI: Yeah. Do you think now, because I feel like that when my mum's like – when I'll see something and I'm like, 'how dare you get rid of that? I would've never have fitted in it, but how dare you get rid of it?'

MIQUITA: How dare you? Indeed.

KIRI: Um, I'm holding onto stuff now for my children, because I'm like, 'I don't want them to see something and be cross with me.'

MIQUITA: Totally. My mum had these tassel dresses made for her that were so cool in like red, black, and gold, I think she had one in. And I was obsessed with them. When she sang, she would wear them – when she performed, and I was just like, ‘oh.’ And I was like the other day, ‘where are those tassel dresses?’ ‘I don’t know.’ I was like, ‘Mum, for fuck’s sake. How can you not know?’

They’re like bespoke made tassel dresses from the 80s that she just – she’s like – now, obviously as everyone knows, style is very important to her and it’s a very big part of her career and – but it’s taken a lot for my mum to sort of get into her style again and feel confident and really go somewhere really no one ever expected – she must’ve watched a lot of Drag Race, basically, and simultaneously started working loads and loads more, and has really created this whole new identity for herself through what she’s wearing.

And she’s still Andi, do you know what I mean? She’s still Mum but I just love that clothes have become such a huge part of her life, because they never really, really were. They have been sporadically but not like now. And I think as a 57 year old black woman on telly, it’s nice to show you can still, you know, vibe it out. I love that. And I’m so impressed by Mum and what she does on telly with her style.

KIRI: She’s so fantastic. I’m – I’m going to ask her. She’d be a great episode.

MIQUITA: Yeah, she would. She would.

KIRI: Um, um, have you got an item of clothing that you put on that you instantly feel great in?

MIQUITA: Yeah, it’s an olive green mini skirt, um, that I, uh, wore to host Sunday Brunch recently. And I was like, ‘this is what you wear on telly to have some fun.’ It felt great. It was like four quid and it

was to the knee but it was just really nice on the waist, and I got it taken up just to exact right length. And I wore it with this stripey, um, uh, green, black, and white top that I got from BHF in Chingford and I thought, 'this whole outfit cost an eight – eight quid. Under a tenner. And I'm hosting Sunday Brunch.'

So it felt quite powerful to again show that these – these norms and these particular ideas just mean nothing. You can wear whatever you want. And that skirt makes me feel sexy and powerful. It does. Yeah, it does. I love it. It's such a good olive green. It's just perfect. And I love – and – and it was like this much longer and me and Sev just took it up to here. She did such a nice job.

KIRI: What material is it?

MIQUITA: I can't even explain. It's like really nice sort of crepe almost. But let me tell you about this label. Because I was like yeah, that's – that's the shit I'm looking for. Ah, it's like French. Irene Van Ribb por idem, Paris. Like brilliant. Where the hell is that?

KIRI: I love it.

MIQUITA: Where the hell's that? I just thought that is my – that – to me that's the kind of shopping and experience that, I don't know, makes life worth living.

KIRI: Yeah. What is your experience – because we've chatted about it quite a bit, but like lots of people have a tricky relationship with shopping. Are you someone who does it online? Do you want to be there in person? Is it all secondhand now or do you still use the high street?

MIQUITA: If I'm really honest I don't use the high street anymore. I haven't shopped there for a very long time. I don't think I will. Um, it is mainly charity shops. Yeah, it's charity shops. And I quite like to

shop alone. Because I'm quite a hunter. And I do a good two hours session just up and down Stokey. Sometimes I'm like, 'oh, I'm going to check out Wells street, or maybe I'll go a bit further to the suburb bits.'

And I – I really enjoy it as time to myself. Because I like – it's this one time where my mind is working, sort of like presenting, it's like my mind's working but I – I'm not even there. It's like bigger than me. It's like I wish I could see my facial expression when I'm in a charity shop because I do just get like, 'urgh,' and I just know what I want and who I am in the same way that I feel when there's a camera on me. I'm just like, 'I know who I am and I know what I'm here to do.' That's how I feel.

KIRI: So you just hit onto like a higher plane when you're shopping

MIQUITA: It's a different frequency. It's a different frequency. It is. It 100% is. Like if you say to me today, um, 'you've got tomorrow off and you can go charity shopping,' I'll be like, 'ooh, that sounds like a good day. Where will I go?' Like it – for me it's like the most beautiful way to spend time with myself. It becomes quite an internal experience.

KIRI: I – it's – that's exactly how I feel. It's my like – it's my me time thing, is charity shopping.

MIQUITA: Zone out. I love talking to the people that work in charity shops. They always have such great stories and so much more – so much better knowledge than people think, actually. Like I think people should know that you can talk to the people that work there and that – and that the shops are a lot more organised than you think and there are sections and they – they are there to help and they really do. They really do.

KIRI: Yeah, and it's – it's a good mix of relaxing and stimulating I find as well, do you know what I mean? Like it's this thing of being like – but they like – the real sort of kick of adrenaline I get when I find something amazing, that I'm like, 'I'm going to have this forever and it was a quid.'

MIQUITA: Yes. Yeah yeah yeah, and it was a quid. And it was a quid. It's just like, 'oh please', I refuse to live any other way, you know?

KIRI: The – do – I don't know if they have it in London, but there's so many up here where there's a rail outside and it just says, 'a pound,' handwritten hastily on a bit of card, and there's a rail of stuff. Like if there's one of those outside a charity shop, I'm like, 'it's going to be great inside.'

MIQUITA: Well, yeah. Yeah. We sometimes have those. Uh, not enough, I think. Um, you know, I am – there are parts of me that are worried because there – I think there are certain charity shops that are a bit overpriced. And I think it would be a real shame to take this sector into a place it doesn't need to go. Because it really is about helping the community around you and – and us all looking after each other. And if this new sort of – the new eyes on this sector, the new eyes on the secondhand world incurred it to then become something that we started to not be able to afford, I'd be livid. Livid. Because it's quite a sacred world and it needs to be existed in – in the right way and lived in within the right way. So I hope that – I hope that the industry doesn't, um, mess with charity shops too much. I think – I don't think it will, but –

KIRI: Yeah. And I – I think they're a great thing, but like I never was very excited about Oxfam Originals because I'm like, 'oh, no, the fun bit for me is discovering it.'

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: And if someone's discovered it for me, I'm like, 'oh, that's not what I wanted. I wanted to stumble across it myself.'

MIQUITA: Yeah, give me the hunt back. I think what – what we should all – what – what every charity shop should remember is that there isn't anything there that needs to be sort of modernised or anything. I don't – I think the experience is on point and it – people just need to have that experience more and more and realise how much it gives them and how rewarding it is. And then you get beautiful clothes at the end that you have forever for a pound.

KIRI: Yeah. Um, I think this'll be the most difficult question I've asked you then, which is, um, which is – what is the best thing you've ever got secondhand or from a charity shop or thrifted? I feel like it would change every week with you.

MIQUITA: Yeah, of course. That is a toughy. I would say this long leather coat, which is really narrow and it's to the knee and it's old mashup leather. But it's soft and it's quite thin. And I think if it was on a high street – from a high street shop it would be bulkier. The leather wouldn't be as nice and I don't think it would be cut as narrowly. There's something about the cut that – that I know I could've only found it in a charity shop. And it's stylish and I wore it to, um, the Roxanne show and everyone was like, 'what? What are you wearing?' I was like, 'literally ten pound jacket.'

So again, when I can take things out of the space I find them in and then take them to places they never thought they'd go as it were, I feel like that's just fun for me and the item. And that jacket, I always feel so good in that. Yeah, I love it. It's definitely one of my favourite things I've ever found. Yeah.

KIRI: I love –

MIQUITA: And that grey suit. And that grey suit. And that grey suit. Oh.

KIRI: What grey suit?

MIQUITA: It is too hard a question. Ugh, it's just so good. I just put it on and it just fits so well. And suits don't fit that well all the time. But the trousers were like – and then they came down with a little kick flare and then the jacket was a bit oversized. And I wore it to, um, host the Cheltenham Literature Festival with my mum. I just ran out and went to the first charity shop and found it in five minutes for 20 quid and then wore it. And – and it had a waistcoat, so I wore it without the jacket and just the waistcoat and trousers. And I just felt so good. So good. And it was cool to like host something, um, and wear something from the charity shop down the road from it. Because and – you never know where it came from.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: How do you see your style evolving or do you see your style evolving as you – as you get older?

MIQUITA: Well when I turned 30 I suddenly thought I had to stop wearing mini skirts and that was a really upsetting day for me, and now I'm 37 and I wear them everyday, basically. So I think – I think for me, uh, the evolution of one's style is quite nice to come and find you. I don't think I could plan it, but I do know that, um, I think – I don't know.

I couldn't tell you because the things that I love now are so the backbone of my wardrobe, i.e. I love a beautifully crafted kitten heel shoe. I love a mini skirt. I love a sleeveless sweater vest. I love a man's jumper. A cashmere jumper. There are just staples that I love. But I'd be interested to see how they are going to start evolving, because – and I think it will find me. I don't think I know. It's bigger

than me. I'll let it find me. Oh, and I am going to start wrapping my hair. Big time. I definitely want to do that. I think that would be really nice.

KIRI: Love it.

MIQUITA: I also think as, um, I – as a black woman, I don't think people associate – I think people find it more surprising that this is where I like to shop as well. And I quite like the idea of mixing – so I've been – I've been buying these little – because, you know, secondhand shopping isn't just charity shops. I also go to the African stall on Ridley Road market and buy these like 10 pound little girls' dresses, but they just look like mini dresses in like Kente print. I love those. Love those. And I got them – I got top versions and I was wearing those with like little tailored skirts that I found in charity shops. So I'm really also trying to mix my heritage, who I am, where I'm from, and, uh, and show that that can be sort of – I don't know, all thrown together and something quite exciting can come from that.

So I'm excited to know. Because when I got to the Caribbean, I was like, 'oh, I'm so Caribbean.' They were all like neat jeans, a good shirt, a plimsole. I was like, 'this is how I like to dress. I'm just Caribbean.' That's why my nanny's my biggest style icon, I think. Apart from Cher. My nanny. Um, so yeah. I've been – I've been quite interested to see, you know, I'm doing a lot of different kinds of work at the moment in lots of incredible places and meeting a lot of different people, so I'm excited to see how this stuff influences like what I – where I – how I start dressing.

KIRI: That's so interesting. It does sound like wherever you go you pick up things. Like, you know, when you were in Spain you're like, 'I got grunge.'

MIQUITA: Yeah.

KIRI: And then you went to the Caribbean and be like, yeah, just picking up bits from everywhere. It's, um, it's, um, adds to the adventure as well, right? And the story.

MIQUITA: Yeah, collecting stories all over the place. That's like my job for my actual job. And also I think that's the way – the way I like to dress. Definitely I see people, I think about the story behind them and why they put that on today. All the time.

KIRI: It's so nice, um, to hear you talk about it. Because you – it – you talk about clothes the way that I – in the same passionate way that I do for the same reasons. But what struck me when you were talking about it then, especially when you're talking about shopping, is like – it's almost like – and this is – I don't want to put words in your mouth, but like it's almost like a spiritual thing that you're tapping into this much bigger thing and there's a sense of history and story and heritage that's sort of like – it's almost how people feel about religion or, you know, visiting certain buildings.

MIQUITA: Absolutely. Absolutely. I think it – that's why I said like when we first started talking, like it runs deep because that's why I always say we're not really talking about fashion, we're talking about clothes – style and clothes. And I think that they – those two things, the clothes you buy and the style you have, it comes from the life you've lived, the experiences you've had, the people you know, the way you love, the way you feel, the way you dance.

And I think if anyone feels lost in what they want to wear, tap into that. Tap into some deeper stuff. Because it's not just clothes, you know? It's energy. It really is an energy.

And I think if my life wasn't – if I hadn't built myself back up and was doing all the great things I always wanted to do again, then I probably wouldn't be dressing like this. But I'm happy and I'm proud

of myself. So I'm dressing in a way that has pride and adventure and freedom. Because I feel like those are the three things that I've really tried to bring back into my life. So remembering that it's not just clothes and it is actually your energy, and to tap into that whenever you want to get dressed, that's where the real adventure is. And the real fun.

KIRI: One last question for you. Thank you so much for your time, this has been such a great episode.

MIQUITA: Oh, thank you.

KIRI: Um, so this might be – feel like, um, a bit sombre, but see it as a celebration. And so you're no longer with us, it's your funeral, um, you're going to be buried or cremated, um, you're in a – in the casket, we can see you. What's the outfit?

MIQUITA: God, that is a bit intense. Hm. I'm in a – okay, shall I just say what's come into my head? I don't know why. Oh my god, it's – oh my god, that's really weird. It's the outfit I wore to church with my mum in the Caribbean. That's really weird. This is just what came into my head. White shirt and then like a sort of, um, kind of shift shirt and then a sort of silk, emerald, turquoise pencil skirt. And then my hair wrapped. I think I would like to be in the grave with my hair wrapped.

KIRI: Oh my gosh.

MIQUITA: And that is one – yeah, that's really weird that I just – I thought, 'that's the outfit,' and then I thought, 'why do I know that?' And it's like because I've just seen that, because we're in the edit at the moment. And I was like, 'I've just seen' – that is what I wore to church. And I've never managed to get my mum to church until, of course, we were filming a TV show. So she, um, she – and she and I had quite a spiritual, incredible time there, so I think it must've

stayed with me more than I thought, because it's now the outfit I want to be buried in. But yeah, that's – that's what I see. That's a great outfit. I may wear it before the grave because it's such a nice outfit. I may wear that again.

KIRI: It's, uh, it's a beautiful outfit. Um, and this has been a beautiful episode. Thank you so much for doing it. You've been so wonderful.

MIQUITA: Thank you.

[Upbeat electronic music]

KIRI: How great was that episode? Now I'm absolutely sang from the same hymn book when it comes to clothes as Miquita. Love a chazzer shop, love secondhand. But this chat and listening to it back, actually, for the edit, has really – well, it's really made me commit to redoubling my efforts. I try and be as sort of sustainable as I can and try and shop at indies who I know are more responsible, try and not use, you know, fast fashion. I'm aware that lots of this is entrenched in privilege, um, but I'm – I'm just really going to go for it this year.

My pals and I, in fact, have challenged each other to only buy secondhand or swap clothes for the first six months of the year. So that might not feel like a big thing, but I'm used to just – I get a kick from acquiring things. But I think maybe I can still get that kick from the old chazzers.

And I'm just – I'm going to lean into the swapping nature of stuff. I've swapped some clothes recently and it's been great. You get to flounce around, it feels like you've got a new outfit. You don't feel bad if you only wear it a couple of times because then it goes back to its original owner. I also love – love love love bringing people into this little cupboard where I'm recording this right now and being like, 'right, what are we dressing you for?' Um, because also my weight fluctuates so much. Babes, you could be a size six, you could be a size

36, I'll have something to fit you. Um, so yeah, if you want to double the size of your wardrobe, just become a good friend of mine.

Um, so yeah, I'm going to keep you guys posted on how that goes. I've got a couple of things being made for me for my tour, but other than that it's going to be nothing new, um, which is – well, it's a bit scary.

Um, so I thought I would talk about a vintage small business, um, now vintage I know, and in fact I raised it in this chat with Miquita, is not very size inclusive. However, I think I might've found a bit of a work-around for that. Um, I'm – I am sceptical when it comes to sort of size-inclusive vintage, because also I'm a bigger lass myself and I know the rollercoaster of finding a vintage gem in a charity shop and then seeing a label that says 14 and knowing that that's going to come up more like a ten. And it doesn't matter that you know that. You still, you know, feel like, 'oh, so I can't fit into this,' and I'm still working on that thing of having my self-esteem linked to what number is on, uh, clothes that I put on.

So I'm going to tell you about this business that might help if you are in a similar situation to me. It's a female run vintage business, so yes please, yes please. Very sustainable. It is called Plus Size Pin-Up Boutique, and it specialises in vintage items in sizes 16 and over. Occasionally a 14 pops on there, but yeah, 16 and over. It is run by a gal called Roxy who weirdly I used to bump into on the open mic scene in Preston. Yes, all my stories will be this glamorous and showbiz.

Uh, she's an actor, singer, loads of other talented things, but she is and always has been amazingly well-dressed. So on her Instagram page, and I think – she's got an Etsy as well, she does all the styling, sourcing, and modelling herself, so you can actually see what these pieces look like on a human plus-size body. Um, she has her measurements on her Insta too, which is so useful. And I can't think

of many folk outside of drag that rock a wig harder than her. She's the queen of wigs.

Um, so there's loads of great styling ideas on there as well, as well as that – just that useful thing of being like, 'okay, this is what it would look like on me,' or, 'oh, okay, well that's going to be a bit tighter on my bum because it's a bit bigger.' It's just so invaluable and a great sort of, um, sustainable way to be shopping.

She's also taught me how to care for my mohair too. I had no idea where to even start with that, and caring for vintage is something that I am very aware of because I feel like, you know, you're a custodian of this stuff. Um, she did this tutorial on caring for mohair. How to clean it, um, you know, what to use for how long, what temperatures. Absolute game changer, guys. I no longer have to drown my cardigans in perfume so they don't smell of a charity shop.

So go and give her a follow on Instagram at [plussizepinupboutique](#), um, if that is your thing and she also has an Etsy. I'll make sure I share, um, her page and highlight it in our small business highlights on Instagram.

Thank you so much to everyone who keeps messaging us on Insta. And people find out about the podcast all the time, which is lovely, and people, uh, recommending it to other people is absolutely gorgeous. Um, and emailing us as well. I really love the chats that we're having with you guys. And so much of what you've said about Series one has helped us to build Series two and the kind of guests we're getting on and the kind of conversations that you guys want from us, so thank you for that.

Um, we've got an email here from Lottie who says, 'Hi Kiri, I'm a huge fan of the pod. Every episode has had me aggressively nodding along and I've been really enjoying the diversity of the guests. I've just listened to the episode with Sofie Hagan. The entire

conversation was so enlightening and fascinating to listen to, and I applauded when the topic of school uniform came up.

I went to primary school for two years before being taken out and home educated. During those two years I had a really rough time for many reasons, but I particularly remember constantly idolising the beautiful popular girls because their hair and uniform didn't look like mine. It created an environment where our poorness and my mum's make do and mend attitude was really highlighted, making me an outcast. When I was taken out of school, I really blossomed in terms of clothing and self expression.'

That's so great to hear, Lottie. She says, 'I had more questionable outfits than I care to dwell on,' yes, 'but the main thing is that I felt amazing because I was wearing exactly what I wanted. I think this is a really important part of my development into later life and having confidence when it comes to my fashion choices. I experimented more than any of my peers with colours and trends, had a go at most phases including goth, emo, scene, hippie, punk, and picked elements of all of these to hang onto.' Yes, you're speaking to soul here, Lottie.

'Nowadays I don't think I'm quite as experimental as I was throughout my adolescence, but I've hung onto the playfulness and enjoyment that I get out of mixing up my appearance and putting together outfits. I nearly always get a comment on how brave my clothes or hair are every time I go out, and I think it's sad that people feel like you need to be brave to wear what you want. Maybe if everyone was given more freedom with their appearance at a younger age, then people would be more liberated and have more creative freedom when it comes to styling. As ever, thanks so much for the wonderful conversations.'

What a great message, Lottie. I had never thought about it, um, in terms of that. And I – yeah, I guess I still have that old-fashioned idea

that school uniform is a way of protecting people without money but, you know, there's a like – I mean kids are just really astute with that stuff, aren't they? They will zone in on, you know, what logo you've got on your plain black trainers, um, whether it's – it's black on black or not. So yeah, I think that there's maybe something – the freedom and liberation of expressing yourself is definitely worth the offset of, you know, potential label snobbery or whatever else goes on. And you're right, that happens with uniforms anyway.

Um, I think you're so right as well, the – do you know what I've noticed? That so many of the people on this podcast that I think are really stylish were goths and emos and hippies and punks and all that sort of counterculture stuff when they were teenagers, it's so rare that they were like, 'oh yeah, I just loved Topshop and whatever they said to wear I would wear.' They're always the sort of like, you know, outsider people who are then cherry picking from all that and have the style that they have today.

So yeah, I think, um, well I can already tell, mate, you're going to be very stylish. You're exactly the kind of person I'd have on the podcast. Um, thank you so much for sending that. And for just being so honest about your journey with it as well. Um, yeah, food for thought. Uh, as someone who wants to have a family and kids and the school uniform chat is obviously going to come up. And hm, very interesting, mate.

Um, if you would like to email us, you can email us on whoyouwearingpod@gmail.com, on Instagram we are @whoyouwearingpod, um, you can DM us on there. I don't look because I keep away from any DMs, but producer Jo is all over it.

And also if you would like to kick off your New Year with a lovely review of the podcast, I'd buzz off that, mate. I'd absolutely love it. Because the more nice reviews, the more, um, people find us. And, uh, that's all I want. I want as many people to listen to these

conversations because the guests coming on are being so open and really pulling out a piece of their heart, so I just want to repay them by having as many people listen to these really incredible, um, conversations as possible. Um, we are back next week with the fantastic, iconic national treasure, Joe Lycett. Um, so come and join us as I chat to the fantastic Joe Lycett and ask him, 'who are you wearing?' Bye.

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