

Who Are You Wearing? With Tom Allen

Kiri 00:37

Welcome to who are you wearing? I'm Kiri Pritchard McLean, a comedian that loves clothes and loves chatting to stylish people about why they wear the clothes that they do. This week I'm chatting to one of the wittiest and most thoughtful humans I know, the immaculate Tom Allen. There's some really lovely chats in this episode, about being the eccentric kid in your school that I just have a feeling is gonna resonate with many of you people who listen, it was recorded in July 2021. So a little while ago now, but Tom is so articulate about what it was to be growing up gay, and especially about how flamboyance and eccentricity were treated at that time. It's very hostile world, underneath the Tory government, imagine that. As a result, we'll be chatting about homophobia, especially in relation to HIV. So just a heads up on that. Thomas speaks so honestly, and with such empathy for his younger self, but also I think the people around him I think he gives such an insight into how important representation and joy is to people's self esteem. It's a really, really lovely chat he's, god I could just listen to him for hours and hours. There's also a delicious story about buying a vintage dinner jacket in this episode, with a great bit of advice about how to keep your money safe. It's something that my mum always told me to do as well, so look out for that. Please enjoy this episode, as I asked Tom Allen, who are you wearing?

Tom 02:13

Two things stick out for me. One was when I would like to get dressed up in a pair of my mom and dad's old curtains, and would put the wrapper of a cake like you know there's like a card wrap around the outside of a round cake. Don't you get cakes like a Victoria sponge or something. I put that on my head, and it's just that my mom or dad put the, an old roller blind going down the stairs and I would sit at the top and pretend that I was an emperor. That's one sense of style.

Kiri 02:45

Really great.

Tom 02:46

How would you describe your style? Imperious and regal, let's say, other moment was when my dad, this was the era of going to dinner dances in the I'd say mid to late 80s. My mum and dad would sometimes go to a dinner dance because they had some friends who were members of cherry lodge golf club in New Westrom in Kent. Oh, these were high days these were high days.

Kiri 03:13

The boom bust era stuff.

Tom 03:15

Boom bust era pre 92 monetary crash, sorry John Major, and dad got a dinner jacket, and I was furious because I always wanted a dinner jacket with the silky lapels, and I threw a huge tantrum and cried about it because I wanted one I couldn't believe my dad will betray me by getting one and not getting me one. Because I just wanted to look like cannon and ball, who I was obsessed with on the television.

Who always wore, It was the time when people always wore dinner jackets on Saturday night television. Cannon and Ball and various other people who were entertaining at that time, but it was always like the Diriga, you know, sort of glitzy sets they'd have at the Royal variety and things. I wanted to be there, and I was obsessed when we did a school, when we did a nursery school nativity, and I was like, why is our stage wood and dusty? Why can't it be shiny? Like it is on the television? I wanted it to just to be shiny.

Kiri 04:06

Oh my gosh, that's so interesting. So are you watching that stuff on the telly and so are you trying to emulate it in what you wore because you wanted to be there or were you trying to emulate it because you were like, that is the coolest you can look?

Tom 04:20

Oh, I think I wanted to be there. I want to be part of it. I wanted to be in that world. I want to be in the television with Cannon and Ball or Russ Abert or whoever I was obsessed with that, that week, Little and Large or maybe Hale and Bass, who are the management, and, you know, there's I just sort of wanted to be in it. I just loved it. I just love the glitz. I'm so taken in by the glitz and glamour. A bit like, you know like Dolly Parton wrote Jolene about the sex workers she saw in her local high street, and that was, that was my jolene was Cannon and Ball.

Kiri 04:54

So you had a strong sense of style as a kid?

Tom 04:57

Yeah, I think so, and I always liked the idea of suits and suiting. I remember going to my mom's cousin's wedding in Bournemouth, Geraldine, and it was a big occasion because my nan very proud irish lady, very keen for the family to look after the family to look our best, and I was adamant that I wanted to wear a blazer but mums like, why don't you just wear that lovely cardigan, I got you? This was, I was, I was circa five to six years old, and I was adamant, and then we were in Woolworths and the lady bird collection had a blazer and I made my mum buy it for me and I got to a place where I was so thrilled. Mums like do you really want to do it? I mean, I think it was like nine pounds, which was a lot of money at that point. But I being the demanding little bitch that I was. ? So I got to wear a blazer, I was thrilled. My nan did like it. But I think there was a sense of like, I think Mum was wanting me and my younger brother to be wearing the same outfit that would have been.

Kiri 05:58

That's so interesting that already you were going for something very formal before probably an age where you could articulate what formal was?

Tom 06:10

Yes absolutely, and I was always kind of intrigued by, like, history and kind of old fashioned ways, and I think even then I was sort of getting the sense that I wanted to escape the world, the world felt too frightening to me, and so I wanted to escape to a world which in my mind was more contained. If it was in the past, even though the past was obviously more frightening and more, you know, people had to

fight wars and things which I don't mind telling, I don't think I'd be very good in and I think you know, but in my mind, I sort of had the sense of the past as a time, I guess, because I'd seen it a lot through sort of musicals. But a time when things were a little bit more kind of, I don't know, there were rules and guidance and stuff. I think strangely very oddly, I've always been fascinated by formality and, and etiquette and manners and stuff and that, that grew as I got into adolescence bizarrely, but even from a very early age. I like the idea of formality and would lay the table even as a child and like even the breakfast cereals, I'd lay out an order and then I'd be annoyed with my dad for messing it up. Oh, am I supposed to, oh I can't move it, I can't touch anything then? What's the point of this table? I don't know, I was just getting the box out of the middle. No, you don't understand you've ruined it, and mum would be like, your dad's gotta get his breakfast. It's ruined.

Kiri 07:34

I am imagining those, you know, those variety packs of cereal, and you're really cross that he's not taken one, the Frosties or the Cornflakes from the end.

Tom 07:44

Symmetry always symmetry. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Coco Pops were saved for the last Friday of half term, because that's the only time we were allowed selection boxes was during the holidays. Were you allowed them all the time Kiri?

Kiri 07:53

No, I don't actually think, I think a selection box was the thing that came a lot later when my parents wouldn't have, my parents were very weird about food, which is why I have such a chill and healthy relationship with it now. So there's certain things that were completely, crisps I didn't have until I was probably about 12 and biscuits weren't allowed. There were odd things that, my chewing gum, we used to sneak but we weren't allowed. There was odd things that my mother had in her head that we weren't allowed.

Tom 08:23

Probably healthier to not have crisps and biscuits.

Kiri 08:26

Well the other side of it, she was getting microwave frozen Donna kebabs from Iceland so it wasn't totally consistent line in my eyes.

Tom 08:34

The messaging was different then. It's just different. Microwaves were a saviour.

Kiri 08:42

Oh god they're so delicious. Did you, who was dressing you then? Was it you and mum or was it mum being like, No, this is what you wear? Or were you actually dictating?

Tom 08:53

It was me and mum, I think when I was small and even if I was wearing like a tracksuit I would see it as kind of like a formal thing like almost like a suit. I remember I had a green tracksuit with white stripes on it and a red collar, and it was a little Italian flag, and I remember being very proud of it, I would wear it as though it was like a uniform and like a sort of a thing that was something to be proud, you know, like you're proud of, I suppose and to treat formally even though it was a tracksuit from quality seconds and it was the tuesday of half term and I was in year one but yeah, that was all that sort of sense, and then shell suits came in later but obviously I was dressing myself by that point but shell suits were very cool. But yeah, my mom would just be, and it was only every now and then I'd want to kind of affect the, basically I suppose the clothes that my dad was wearing when he was going to work as a car salesman in Thornton heath.

Kiri 09:51

Oh lovely.

Tom 09:54

I guess don't miss out. But yeah, but I think I just wanted to be like, I always wanted to be a grown up, that's the thing. Ever since I was a small child, I want to be grown up. I never saw myself as a child. I always felt like I was born as a, as like a 46 year old man. So I was always kind of uncomfortable. I was wearing like, children's clothes. Weird, though, really, and now as an adult, I'm much more childish, I think, sort of don't seem to have any grasp of what it is to be an adult, put the bins out, feed my son.

Kiri 10:22

You're wearing a romper suit right now?

Tom 10:23

Yes of course its so much easier to take on and off, when I'm going in the paddling pool.

Kiri 10:29

Were you ever made to wear something that you hated being in that you felt very uncomfortable in?

Tom 10:36

Well, not the opposite of kind of what people I suppose would feel about going to a wedding or something. Although I did go to a wedding, and I was asked to wear like tails. But it was hired, and it was somebody else's taste, and I didn't care for that. It was like a hired morning suit. I didn't like the way that it was kind of, I was like, if I was wearing a morning suit, I would wear it. I would wear on my terms, and I would choose, I would research, I wouldn't just go to a hire shop and just take whatever they had. But that's, that I had to sort of wear it and just deal with it. But I've managed to style it in my own way a little bit, I think, you know, kind of had sort of a cravate situation going on, which I didn't like so I just tied that like a normal tie. It's gonna look nice, but I think you have to, you have to really go for it, and quite a, you have to sort of know exactly what it is. It was one of those thick ties, and I just tied it like a normal tie.

Kiri 11:30

What year was this?

Tom 11:33

Must be again, mid 2000s I think?

Kiri 11:35

Cause that bit, the 2000's sort of Beckham era marriage where everyone wore those awful fat cravates and usually a three quarter jacket, which was, and there was a lot of purple and white everywhere.

Tom 11:47

Yes, I didn't care for it. I have to tell you. I'm sorry. If somebody's looking at that on a wall, reminiscing about their happiest day. I didn't like, I didn't like that style. Yeah, it was very, because it wasn't, it was neither one thing nor t'other. That's what I didn't like about it. It was kind of like a sort of a slightly apologetic version of a kind of classic formality. Try and sort of update it, and I kind of thought, well, if you want to go for a classic formality just go for it, or just wear whatever you want, like, or wear a nice suit. Don't feel like you have to do a certain thing. It just sort of felt like it was an obligation that went with it, which I didn't. I didn't think, I think that is when people feel obligated to do a thing, and they don't feel comfortable.

Kiri 12:28

I have a very visceral reaction to that sort of clothing. It's the same one I have, and this is a very snobby thing I'm about to say, to reproduction victorian furniture. Like, I just think we can all see what you are. So it would be better if you concentrate your efforts on being something authentic to you.

Tom 12:46

Yeah, yes, for example, ? and which was very much de rigueur in, well, in my childhood, and then, when I was 16, I suggested that my mum paint all of the reproduction furniture, and actually, it looks stunning. But the, well she has painted it in neutral. But the yeah, it was, there is a sense of that, like, just be you, and like don't feel you have to be a certain way that's, it's the only thing I feel sad is when people feel they have to be a certain thing. It's just like, you've just be whatever you want is great. But I realised that's glib to say, but that will be what I would encourage, like whatever you feel you want to wear.

Kiri 13:25

So did you have an outfit then as a kid or a teenager that you put on that you just never want to take off because of how it made you feel?

Tom 13:33

Well, so as I got into my teenage years, I really struggled with the downtime in the summer holidays. Because you go I find school is all about like, you will do this at this time, and then you'll do this and when you go home, we will control your time as well because it will give you homework, and everything was so regimented, and then they just go on the 12th of July or whenever like oh, see ya, and we lost six weeks of not having it just in freefall, I didn't know what to do.

Kiri 13:57

You've been institutionalised?

Tom 13:59

I was institutionalised, do you know that man at the end of Shawshank Redemption, he goes to work in a supermarket, grateful, and I, so I felt really quite, quite didn't know what to do with myself, and this was a time when I was coming to terms with being a gay man, and was also realising that it was not an encouraging environment in the sort of 90s, and I didn't see at any point I'd be able to come out or I never saw the point where I'd be even happy. You know, it was very sort of toxic in my experience, at times, and so this is when I really leaned into this idea of like victoriana clothing or formal clothing, and I'd watched Mary Poppins again and again, and George Banks and wearing a bowler hat and, and to the soundtrack of Julie Andrews singing feed the birds, wandering alone through the streets of London. Going back to the bank was going to get told off and Fred Astair and all that, I just sort of longed to dress like that, and a bit sort of moved to somehow transport myself to maybe not that actual era. But the idea of that era as created in films, which is so unhinged, but sort of made sense to me at the time, and I think that's, that's when I would go to like the library and read up on it to get manuals, and then decided that the job for me would be becoming a butler, a la Anthony Hopkins in Remains of the Day, and because of that will be perfect because I can wear formal clothes, I don't have to worry about my own feelings, which I was finding frankly, quite untidy, and I could wear formal clothes and just sort of be in this sort of subservient role where I just, my concern would be somebody else's life, and I wouldn't have to worry about myself, it's very sort of codependent, I suppose, or something. But so as a teenager, that's when I really lent into that kind of formality in formal dressing, and when I got to sixth form, I'd wear bow ties, and I'd try and wear detachable collars and would sometimes wear a bowler hat, would carry an umbrella, would carry a briefcase, and it would, I knew it would create a response, and I sort of saw it as my like, and my mum would be like oh can't you just wear something normal? Worried that I'd be attracting violence, but I felt like no, I've got to do this. It's my way of being subversive, I think, in my way of being protest, and then what was more infuriating was that after a while, people really liked it, and really applauded it, and then I was like, oh shit I thought it was my way of sticking my fingers up to people who were like, it's you know, as you get older, kind of teenagers aren't as hostile, and they said something like, oh, it's really cool. I like what you're wearing. Oh, that's really nice, and I was like, No, my thing is being an outsider, so then it was infuriating.

Kiri 17:00

So normally, when people have a rebellious stage as a teenager, it might be a piercing or you know, a lot of people will do the goth thing. Hello, I did that. So was your rebellion looking like you worked on the stock exchange?

Tom 17:14

Yes, or yeah, looking like that, or looking like a butler, or looking, yeah, sort of, yeah, a little bit Neville Chamberlain. Always appeasing people a little bit, but I feel like I've broken into, a little bit of Monica in my life. But with various figures from the 1930s. But yeah, that kind of, kind of was what, was my sort of version of being a goth, and I suppose in another world, I probably would have been, would have leant towards being some sort of goth. But at the same time, I'd kind of like staked my claim and like, I am different. I'm a, I'm outside of everything, that became part of my identity. So even being part of the goths would have been troublesome, and actually, that group at school were lovely and really

accepting. But somehow, I managed to sort of, like shun, or not, like necessarily want to hang out with me, but didn't sort of engage with them in the way that, looking back I was like, Why didn't I? But I suppose that's the thing of being young and, and sort of scared, and, you know, thinking about everything in the world being all over the place.

Kiri 18:23

It's really interesting that you were dealing with so much as a young gay guy growing up in that environment, in that era, and your sort of way of dealing with it was going, look at this very formal, eccentric thing that I'm presenting almost like you're playing a character and go, I can, I can control all the extraneous variables when you're feeling very, it sounds like out of control inside with your feelings. I just think it's, I mean, well you, did you get a lot of shit, because to me, I'm like, God, you would have got battered growing up in north Wales like that. But then part of me thinks oh no, there were some eccentric kids and actually everybody loved them, after a while once they got their head around it.

Tom 19:04

Well, I think there is like this contingent of us. But what I found, the more I've talked about that experience is that there are, there's probably one at, one of me at every school potentially in some form or another, and I think when I first started secondary school, I really was terrified. I did get beaten up and stuff before I was doing anything terribly eccentric actually, I was trying to blend in, and I was really scared, and I felt like I just had to deny every emotion. You know, like every, and I think a lot of teenagers were like that as well. It's a very confusing time. But as I got to sort of year 9, year 10, probably year 10. I really was like, actually, you know what, I'm doing everything that they're telling me to do, and I'm still unhappy. Maybe I should do a bit of what I wanted to do, and there's this sort of like life force inside that kind of made me not just sort of go just be that person and be eccentric, and like I say did get a bit of shit for it, or if I was walking around Bromley High Street, then potentially I get something shouted at me or I'd get a second glance and that sort of hostility, but I suppose on one hand, I was bringing along myself in a way you could argue, but in another vein, after a while, people who knew me seem to feel, were actually very protective, and even the really kind of terrifying kids in, especially my year, I had a really nice year group in lots of ways. They were, they were very protective of me, which was very lovely, actually. But, yeah, it's sort of, I think there's, my dad, again, to quote my dad, again, the world takes you at your own valuation. So I think if you do, and not that, that's always an easy thing to, you know, achieve, but, but if you do kind of apologise for yourself, sometimes the world will go, Well, you know what, yeah, well, then, then I don't trust you, I don't respect you. But if you kind of can foster a sense of like, actually, this is me, and so you better deal with it, and my mom or dad were very sweet about it really indulged it and my mum works with Uncle Julie, Auntie Julie at the Army and Navy, the department store in Bromley High Street, sadly, now turned into a TK Maxx. I mean, it's like, it's like the, it's like the fall of Rome, and they, Auntie Julie was a very eccentric dresser and would wear kind of like brightly coloured tights and dyed her hair pink, and wore all this is kind of outlandish jewellery and loved eccentricity, and had, you know, her sister lived in Brighton and she was part of this whole kind of like, cool world, and, and so she would always be very encouraging, encouraging, and I think would kind of soothe my mum and be like, it's okay. He'll be okay, my mum's like, oh, god, what's gonna happen?

Kiri 21:36

So your mum's sort of fear is, is that coming from? It's not a place of, don't make a show of us. She's trying to protect you. She thinks that your, your eccentricity is going to make life harder for yourself?

Tom 21:49

I think so. Yeah, I think so, and it was, I think we forget that it was a different era, then, like things were quite markedly different in terms of, you know, we were still the latter years of the Tory government. We were still or even just, you know, maybe it just sort of slightly, if changed with the, like, Tony Blair coming in. It felt like this kind of watershed moment, but, but it was still quite, you know things like section 28, and, you know, eccentricity wasn't there. flamboyance wasn't applauded, people coming out, for example, was something that was still a scandal in newspapers, and still a shocking thing, and newspapers would kind of try and find out about secret gay lovers and all of that sort of thing, which was very poisonous, and there weren't, there wasn't representation of people being out there and being themselves and there's certainly nothing like, you know, when you think like, the great representation that comes from things like drag race, where people couldn't be more exuberant, that now has a place in, in the, in the mainstream media in the mainstream conscious, and that's, that's massive, I think, in the fact that people talk about people being themselves and, and I think actually the marked change from you know, even 10 years ago, even five years ago, actually, and when you think about it, as well, there wasn't the internet so much as the internet, I sometimes get very frustrated with for the horrible people and poisonous things that they say. But also it has meant that people can reach out and know that there are other people like them, more than are there different people in the world and know that there are eccentric, flamboyant exuberant people all over and know that they're, I mean, I thought it's the Little Britain sketch, but I did think I was the only gay in the world because we didn't know any gay, I'm a man who would not talk about sexuality. I feel like it's part of it. But you just didn't know anybody else who was different really, there very few people yet to really search them out. If you found somebody who was in any way different, you'd really be like, Can we be friends, it's really nice if we could be friends. So it was scary and the world felt frightening and the tone was very much be worried. Be worried about everything. Even if there was a sort of like high profile gay people that because of the epidemic with HIV and AIDS and the narrative of tabloids, it was very rare. I can see what parents are scared because you didn't see gay happiness. Which is still something we're struggling with now. I realised, I think there was a point when I was like, Well, you know, why? Why wasn't there more sort of positive representation in my life, and I realised that yeah, exactly. Like you're saying that my parents were scared for me because they knew in their lifetime, a world where it wasn't easy to be a gay man, or an eccentric person. You know, my dad was born in 1941. That was an age which was very, very, very, very different, like where you would, you would be arrested. You would be, you'd never, you'd be sent to prison. So I now realise what a massive shift, well, of course, they've been, as you say, we're hearing so much about HIV/AIDS and the terror of that and the misinformation that came because the government didn't really want to get involved seemingly. So with that comes, that doesn't mean that just nobody knows about it, it means that people, you know, there's misinformation and there's fear, even more fear than they would have been anyway, so I get that it was totally terrifying to them. There wasn't this kind of sense of like, you know, what, you can live a fabulous life, live in, you know, a great apartment with open brick work, and basically, I'm talking about Stuart's flat in ?. Neon, neon lighting, there was none of that. Four wheel drive, playing loud music, friend works in a supermarket, you can't have that, you didn't know, we didn't, they didn't know. They didn't know it was that wonderful world waiting for me. So yeah, but so I've, I think as well, I have a lot more compassion for people of that

time. Realising that was the context of it, and then so any eccentricity or any flamboyance was again, a part of that you'd be seen as a bit of a, somebody people like oh, he's one of them, you know, kind of raised eyebrows or rolled eyes or like, oh, well, I think stay clear of him thank you, that kind of dismissiveness. Happily that seems to be changing.

Kiri 26:18

What were the kids around you wearing then, what were the big trends when you were a teenager, so I can imagine you in your lovely suit, but what's everyone else around you wearing?

Tom 26:29

Very much jeans. Ralph was the aspiration Ralph shirts reference. Reebok classics or Elise if you're feeling a little, you wanted to go a little different, and these trainers which came in a very natty beige, actually, they came in a cream and navy blue and black. Reebok classics, endless combinations. I would say at that point, it was a, I think a straight leg jean or maybe a slight bootcut very slight, maybe an untucked referen shirt and or YSL and I got those jackets, those sort of mod jackets with a collar.

Kiri 27:14

Harrington jacket

Tom 27:15

Is that Harrington jacket with like a chequered inside?

Kiri 27:18

Yes, yeah. Yeah.

Tom 27:18

That was very much the vibe in the wake of Oasis and Blur and Britpop, that sort of, that sort of look, and kickers that was the other shoe. My parents, my mum and dad were having none of it. Like what?! they cost how much? No, we're not getting you them, you would just grow out of them. No, you're not wearing them to school. So I had the imitation kickers, which were from Marks and Spencers. So they're essentially a lace up moccasin. Not, not the same. My maths teacher had the same shoes.

Kiri 27:54

You would have clocked that as soon as you walked in as well. The chill. Like no, not the same shoes as Mr. Marshall.

Tom 28:02

Yeah, yeah. I mean, so and that was early days of secondary school as well when I was like really trying to like blend in and just wanted to be like, one of the, one of the guys, but I yeah, I remember buying all YSL shirt in denim, actually. So I did double denim at that point, and that's, when I wore that, I thought I'd really arrived. But I hadn't. I don't think I had, I think I always felt like that was uncomfortable. I think that's, I suppose going back to your earlier question. I felt like that wasn't right, and so then I was like, that's when I was like, this isn't what I want. I still crave those lovely ties and tie rack.

Kiri 28:43

Thinking about your style as it is today, when did you start being your authentic self in terms of how you dress then, so it's feels like you dabbled with it. But when did it, when did, you know, what we see now that the tailoring in the suits, when did that fully manifest?

Tom 28:59

I think it was when I got into my early 30s. I really liked my early 30s for that reason, I think in my 20s I try and be cool. I tried to fit in and I start doing stand up and I sort of wore suits for that but not sort of outlandish suits. I just sort of wore a suit and I tried to you know wear the bootcut jeans and the square, square loafers as we all did. Basically kitted myself out head to toe from Zara one day just felt like, I'm like, I'm done with being with dressing like a dad, I want to have my own style. Went to Zara bought something with lots of zips on it, looked like it kind of looks very much like a european man. When I was working on the Holloway Road in North London, again another fabulous place if anybody knows that area, and then I sort of was, and I was like and then I started to sort of wear, on stage I'd wear like red trousers or I'd wear brooches or I'd wear neckerchiefs and people at that time again would be like, why the white dress, I don't know if I like those trousers on you. I don't know if I like this. It was like, they probably didn't fit that well, because, well, I didn't have any money. So they were like, probably like what was ever in the sale at Zara or H&M that people were like, why? Why don't you get a nice pair? Why don't you get, and its like, because I can't justify to myself paying 80 pounds for a pair of trousers. So I just wear that sort of stuff. People would be like why, and so I shied away from it again, and then I just went, oh bollocks to all of this, and I just sort of, that's when I sort of started going a bit more all out with like, I want to wear a suit. I want to, maybe I want to wear a dinner jacket, sometimes. Maybe I want to wear this ,maybe I want to, and just sort of embraced a kind of more formal tailoring, and would be like, no, that doesn't fit right. I need to get that fitted right, and just sort of yes, started it, and you'll notice now, like, oh, newsreaders are wearing pocket squares now, when I started, no one was wearing them. So I'd say early 30s, early 30s, mid 30s was kind of.

Kiri 31:02

Did everything feel different when you started getting things taken in to fit you?

Tom 31:07

Well, yes, a bit more. Again, it's always felt a bit like an extravagance though, to have something altered because it costs extra, doesn't it? We have to take it to a person to do it for you, and I suppose I've always been a bit like, oh, is this a waste, am I my embarrassing myself? But actually now I'll go yes, I want it to fit absolutely right, and if it doesn't fit right, I'll be like no, it doesn't fit right, and I'm paying for it. So I want it to be right, and it's something that I happen to you know, enjoy. I don't have kids, but I've got some nice clothes, and so that's what I kind of try not to feel too ashamed about that, and so yeah, so it is nice, it is, and as I say, like my dad said it's about, it's not about how you look, it's about how you feel. So you know that feeling of like when you wear something that you know you love, you feel amazing. Its such a great feeling. I think you get it when you go to like, if you go to a wedding and you're wearing whatever you want and you've dressed up and you've planned an outfit and you've taken time to get ready. It's love, it's lovely, you feel, you feel like Elizabeth Taylor.

Kiri 32:11

Yeah, absolutely. I had that at Joe's wedding the other day where I just like put on a nice dress that I'd had for ages and had the shoes and everything and I was like oh gosh, I feel great, and because of lockdown I've just been locked in a house wearing trackies, I felt like such a celebration. Oh it just is amazing how nice clothes can make you feel. Bit shallow to say but I like nice things.

Tom 32:35

Yeah and like it can be anything but if you, if it's your new thing. It's great. Just enjoy it and look after it and celebrate wearing it and stuff. I do have a style tip. I don't know if there's a point in this when you would like to hear it. The best style advice I have for anybody listening is, never save anything for best. So like if you buy something new and you like wearing it, wear it because I remember doing that of like buying a suit in a sale which I really loved, and then I went and I was like I'll save that for just for best occasions. What is the best occasion? You might wear it, you might go to a wedding once a year, twice a year. Maybe a party, you're wearing it like three times a year. You like wearing it, wear it, I think maybe if you've got a special occasion you want it for, keep it for that maybe the first time then you get the special feeling. But then wear it, just wear it, don't, the instinct to go no, no, no, that's, that's my best one. I'll just wear the old thing, it's like no mate you like it. You deserve it. You wear it, because otherwise, and fashions change and then you don't feel special wearing it. So I just think you got something new or something you love. Just put it on right now, go on, all of you, do it now. I would sometimes wear a dinner jacket around the house when I was, so I remember, so I would get obsessed with going to vintage clothing shops when I was a teenager, all my friends would be like, I don't, I don't know what they'd be doing, fingering each other, and I'd be like, I'd go up to town and I'd take my birthday money and my dad would be like put it somewhere where people can't steal it. So I put it in my sock which is actually much more cumbersome when you're trying to buy something. I'd go around like all these vintage clothing shops, long before vintage clothing was fashionable I hasten to add, all the kind of, famous kind of, vintage markets sort of, like Ladbroke Grove and, and Angel had a market there and Greenwich market actually had lots of stuff, and there's a place called Cornucopia in Victoria, and I bought a dinner jacket there once and it was from, I looked at the label, and it had his name, I don't know who it's from, but had the year 1937 on it, and I thought that was very special, and it's very much cut in that era of jacket which is much shorter jackets on men and higher waist coats because the trousers were like pulled up to your neck, and, and and I loved it and I'd wear it around the house. My mum would be like oh gonna wear that again are you ? I was like yeah just wanted to.

Kiri 34:53

That's so lovely. It's so charming the whole thing and you, I feel like you have fun with your accessories as well obviously have your very classic watch now. But your pocket squares, let's talk about them a bit. When did you start embracing the pocket square? Because I think they're quite as, they're some, they're beautiful, but when you open them out when I've seen them, they are absolutely gorgeous, the pocket squares that you have.

Tom 35:19

Oh, thank you for saying that. I am. I think it felt like a, again a flamboyance to sort of have anything there that wasn't, you maybe have like one, like men's clothing was so apologetic, I think until very recently. It was so like, oh, just don't be that, just don't like, and so the idea of having like something in

the pocket was like, oh who do you think you are, always this like, kind of shaming, I don't know, maybe I projected it. But it follows a sense of like, who do you think you are blunt, but even like a white, something there, like it was, its not, we're not going to a dinner dance, we're not going to a ball. It's not an award ceremony. All right, and then I was that kind of just stuck to it, and then I, and then I think I just, must have just bought one from somewhere. I couldn't what my first one was, I think I bought, it was one, it was a cravate actually, I bought from one of those vintage places. I just stuffed that in, then I was like, oh, that's a bit of fun, and it would just sort of like lift the outfit. That's why I like wearing ties and pocket squares because they are just a bit of a way to add a bit of colour to otherwise what is quite a, can be quite boring look, you know, it's kind of a time when people would wear kind of, like, ill fitted, sort of very boxy, you see it in like, a lot of american sitcoms of that era as well like, I mean, when I first went, I was so excited. I was desperate to go to America when I was like 19, 18, 19. I'd saved up, I had a job and never spent any of the money, and I went to America and everything was really like that, like really kind of still quite 80s and sort of, sort of very broad. There was no, there was no kind of strip, there was no kind of like structure, or kind of embracing of the, of anything really, when it was just sort of like there's just there, just hangs, deneuve big sort of blousey jackets, and, and so yeah, sort of doing that felt like a lot neater, a lot tighter and a lot sort of, I suppose that sort of thing that a gay person would do, and I think I'd been taught that, that was something that I shouldn't do, and so, and then I realised actually, I don't have to, I can recreate that. Sorry, correct that thinking, I don't have to worry about it, and actually, I am a gay man, and I want to dress like that. So I'm gonna dress like that. So when you sort of rewire those, those messages that you've got from early on at school and stuff, and, and you go, Oh, actually, I don't have to be miserable all the time. I can wear, and it's, it's kind of, I think it comes hand in hand with going like, I just want to wear that and I love it, and you see people wear all sorts of things and you go, yeah good. What fun way of expressing yourself, and I think especially after the last 18 months I hope people do that more, that you know if you just find a tablecloth you love, stick your head through it and you know, have the time of your life. Have a great day.

Kiri 38:01

Ruin in the tablecloth. Yeah.

Tom 38:02

I mean, maybe, maybe let people finish their dinner first.

Kiri 38:08

I think that's so interesting about you. Because to me, because you also, when I think of your suits, I think they're very traditional materials like a tweed. You've got some lovely beautiful ones, which to me is quite formal and structured. But there's these just snapshots of joy in your pocket squares and your ties and things like that, that do bring this element of, of fun, is that, are those your sort of flights of fancy, I guess, and do you go for everything, do you go for tie pin as well?

Tom 38:38

I do sort of add a kutramant like that on occasion, and I like, I know it was sort of, sort of slugging off slightly, but I do kind of like the way that David Beckham kind of embraces a certain style, and I think I did yeah, I do sometimes add a little, little flourish here and there. I like that. Rufus Wainwright has

been a big hero of mine for a long time and I remember seeing him like wearing jackets with like brooches and, and stuff that was just like yeah, I'm just here. I just want to, maybe I want to dress as Judy Garland for this concert. What are you gonna, what are you gonna do? Are you gonna call the police on me, and I like that, you know, you see see people like men embracing those, those little kind of flourishes, I think you have Wynn Evans, he has such a great style, you know, he did the brilliant, has he done this show? Oh good. Such a lovely guy and such again, like loves a, he wears lots of like pastel suits, and like really brightly coloured suits, and of course, he's blessed with being ginger. They can wear anything, but I you know, I can't, I can't wear beige. I'm sorry. There's are the rules. We know the rules, and but yeah, he likes to wear a brooch and stuff and I love that. I love that kind of stuff because it's all there for the taking and why not, like why not if you want to, I think it's well, if we look, it's not, not new to have that attitude, because I think in the 70s there was a lot of that kind of dress, dress sense and style, and the 80s I think it had its own extravagances when you think about those, that massive hairdos and there's that huge shoulder pads and clip on earrings, that, sadly, many of the women wear, and then that'll be drag queens will, but the, I think a lot of drag queens still model themselves very much on that 80s style, don't they? Yeah, really, like it's really like 80s. It's so 80s. Why is it Elizabeth Taylor? Yeah, and then the 90s just felt like quite sort of, like, quite grungy, you know, like, not, it was quite like, I remember like khaki cargo trousers that were ill fitting and, and a sort of sport top that felt very practical, but not very fun, and not very, there was nothing showy offy about that. There was nothing exquisite about that. It was all just like, No, that's enough. Fine.

Kiri 40:57

Yeah, black and white, Adidas poppers, like it's weirdly sort of utilitarian and even sportswear wasn't fun.

Tom 41:05

I know it felt like it borrowed everything from practical.

Kiri 41:15

Is there a trend that you have tried to pull off repeatedly that isn't happening?

Tom 41:19

I feel like it is something like sporty and kind of like popping a collar on a, on a polo shirt. Cannot get away with it. I think its very stylish, cannot do it.

Kiri 41:29

Really? I could see it popped and then, and then a knotted cut jumper around your shoulder.

Tom 41:33

Well now you can have that playfulness but like five years ago if you tied a jumper round your neck, people would be like what the fuck is wrong with you? Who do you think you are? Robinsons advert? People will be so adamantly hateful about anything like that. But now you can be like yeah, maybe I fancy dressing like, like I'm on my way to Wimbledon, and it's 1984 and I'm Martina Navratilova. Like, maybe that's who I am today. Like no, no, you know, no one can, no one has a go at you. I like the playfulness of that, or that I'm like, a kind of fairly successful, closeted homosexual in 1979, and I live in

America. Like do you know, you'll be, just take on these characters, pop on, I loved, I loved a shoulder robe. I also love a real shoulder robe. Which is a style I cannot really pull off but I would love to try, which only I would try when I was drunk and thinking I was being very funny, would be to wear either a blazer, or indeed, even better, a coat just across the shoulders not putting through the arms. To me that's what camel, camel coloured jackets are for with one of those wide sort of opera scarf things. Such a strong look. Oh, that is a strong look. Now, I want it even in summer. I want it and I love, yeah I love anything like that, I'd love to wear a cape actually, I think a cape is really, like my friend Dr. Ranj Singh, he wore a camel, I think it was, camel cape he wore to an award ceremony and I thought Oh, that's wonderful. Really long as well. It was really, because again, there's that Victorian style, that sort of like mid 19th century style that was very, like brilliant for sort of making, I think for making it accentuating people in a nice way and sort of those like double layered cloaks. I just love it. Love that kind of Dickensian chic, even though a lot of people were in workhouses, not that chic. That's not the character I want to be.

Kiri 43:34

The good les mis, not the sad les mis, Yeah.

Tom 43:36

Not the sad les mis. Yeah exactly. yeah, yeah, yeah, fun. Fun, nicely dressed, Jean val Jean.

Kiri 43:42

Can I ask you what's the item clothing you've had for the longest? Do you hold on to stuff or do you, are you have a clear out?

Tom 43:50

I do hold on to things actually if there's, if it's sentimental, but I think I try and be a bit Marie Kondo about it. Set it free on its journey, does it spark joy? I think it's probably a tie actually I stole off my Dad, It's a blue polka dot one. That he got from St. Michael. Back in the day and then it's branding was different then.

Kiri 44:12

I liked the St. Michael things, that's how you know you've got a good, also very well made and they always wash well if it's got St. Michael on it.

Tom 44:17

They did wash up well, I'm sure they still do. Shirts actually. I've got from there. Always wash it well, some, some places, a little tip, some places are more expensive, don't wash up as well. Also, I know we're talking about clothing. I feel this is relevant. I'm still getting my head round biological and non biological washing powder.

Kiri 44:32

Isn't it just if you come out in a rash, you shouldn't use biological?

Tom 44:37

You shouldn't use bio. It's got an enzyme in it that, that my friend who is a wardrobe and wardrobe manager and stylist said the enzymes in biological washing powder. You could dissolve a body in, how she knew that I don't know. But she said talk to her, and how she knew I don't know. But also she said don't use biological above 40 because I always thought biological was for the like hardcore staining. Yeah but she said above 40 degrees those enzymes are killed so you need to, not go above 40, it's the non bio you go for the hot wash, discuss.

Kiri 45:14

Well did you not learn about enzymes denaturing above, basically body temperature? So a little active site on an enzyme which eats, eats away that denature's at sort of above body temperature. So yeah, when people sort of boil wash things, or you know, basically should wash at 30 for everything, and then it would still work.

Tom 45:35

Well, I put my face masks on a hot wash and everything, because I thought that will be an important part of like hygiene, and let me tell you silk doesn't do well at 75 degrees. Like I've got these like little squares now I can put over my face. They were like beautiful colours. Beautiful, like designs.

Kiri 45:57

Oh god, I'm so sorry. I really genuinely feel for you there.

Tom 46:01

I thought this is what I need to, I need to do this to kill germs. Yeah.

Kiri 46:06

Is there an era that you wish you existed in for the fashion? I think yours might be probably the earliest area we've ever had anyone suggest?

Tom 46:13

Yep, probably like, I like 1820s to 1850s, 1840s/50s. Yeah, that sort of era. Late Regency. The ones when they stopped wearing, men stopped wearing wigs and started curling their hair and had this very sexy sideburns, and high collar stocks around their neck, and yeah, like a stock kind of tie, and then often a tailcoat, often britches, which is great for showing off a calf, which as we know is the sexiest part of a man.

Kiri 46:43

Yes, very Bridgerton, although people I know, I spoke to someone else about it yesterday, who I think that they know about fashion and fashion history find Bridgerton incredibly distracting because it mixes periods and they were like, Oh, well, four of those fabrics weren't even invented at that time.

Tom 46:59

Oh, that's oh, I'd love to talk to them. It's very, it's, I find it so interesting, the history of fashion, and how a lot of, a lot of like, early 20th century, formal wear evolves out of 19th century work wear, as is often the case, that fashion often goes in reverse of kind of like social structure, and so for example, like Mr.

Banks in Mary Poppins is wearing a striped trouser with a black jacket and waistcoat without striped, striped trousers were often the wear with a waistcoat was often the wear of like farm labourers in the 19th century, and for some reason, it sort of became your cool. Now, if you see somebody at Ascot, they'll often be wearing that same striped trouser tailcoat combo, and sort of evolved for some reason out of, I don't know, I guess a reflection of the chain, you know, the reform bills, and maybe I don't know exactly but I find, fashion is such, it's such a kind of, a bit like that scene in The Devil Wears Prada, where she's like, I don't care about fashion, and then she turns and she's like you're wearing this, which was inspired by this, but it is all kind of a very, very intricate web of a reflection of society, which we don't really realise we're part of, but inevitably, we are part of this, I was gonna say tapestry.

Kiri 48:16

You're so right, and there's more to your story like, the fashion of the time tells you a lot about what's, what like the Dior, new look, with all those, huge volume was like we've all been rationed. Now, let's go wild. We've got material, it tells you so much about the time. Everything's existing, and I think it's yeah, absolutely fascinating. I wanted to ask, is there an item of clothing that you have now that you put on and you just instantly feel amazing in it?

Tom 48:43

Yes, I bought a navy blue suit that I had. Oh, is that? Is that a good answer? Well, yeah, there's a navy blue suit I had made, and it's from a shop that I never thought I'd be able to go to because it was too cool, my mate said it was just too cool, and then I went there, and they were so nice to me, and it's me who just like made myself think that they were too cool for me, and, and I love wearing it, and I worked for my Dad's 80th the other day, and I felt like very cool.

Kiri 49:13

It sounds beautiful. So what is the suit made of?

Tom 49:15

Wool. Just navy blue wool. It sounds quite boring now I've described it, but it's just the way that I know they made it, they made it, I just sort of let them do their thing. I stopped trying to be like, I quite like to have these sort of lapels because that reminds me of Elton John in 1974, and I like these, and like they were, I was just like, whatever you think, I should trust you, and I trusted them in their skills because it's such a skill. Like those crafts people are so amazing, and any craft I think is so, so brilliant, it must be treasured, and so I felt very lucky to enjoy their, their skill and so I just did whatever they said and I enjoy wearing it. So there's that, also I bought a top hat once in Edinburgh. I quite like wearing that around the house. It doesn't quite fit cause I've got a massive head.

Kiri 49:56

I've seen you in a top hat on the side of a, I think it was a tape set of Bleak Expectations.

Tom 50:04

Oh, Kiri, yes. Available all good service stations, yes. The CD of the radio series. We did the spoof Dickens. That's, oh yeah, that wasn't my hat. Yeah. Well, thank you. Maybe I should bring them back. I'm trying to bring back cravats a bit more in the sort of, I don't know, kind of Michael Caine way.

Kiri 50:23

I love it. Oh god yes. Men of that, that era, I just think are so, so well dressed. What's your relationship like with shopping? It sounds like you're an in person shopper, but do you do it online? Do you enjoy it, or is it an ordeal?

Tom 50:41

I will something online, I find it just stressful because I'm like, okay, I have to be in when it arrives, and then I have to organise for it to go back if it doesn't fit. Will, I get caught in that awful trap of going, oh it's fine. I can't be bothered to send it back, I'll just keep it, which I think is the worst. When you've sent it back, you have to keep an eye on your bank statement to make sure they're definitely refunding you. All of these things I find a little, a little, a little bit annoying. So I do prefer to go in if I can. But like if it was a bit of an indulgence, just to be like waltzing around high street, but I love it. I love just going to a shopping centre and picking up some bits and have to go to a Westfield to see what they've got, and if you're in the mood and just buying a few treats, it's lovely isn't it?

Kiri 51:18

It is nice, especially for, I enjoy shopping. If I'm not going for anything specific. If I'm going for something specific. It's an ordeal. You know, if it's like I've got to get a pair of jeans, and then you're like, there are no jeans in the whole shopping centre. Whereas if i'm just like, oh, I'll pop in. I'll find loads of things that I like then.

Tom 51:38

Yeah, exactly. I think with jeans, you just have to wait for the mood to take you. Because like with these ones I've got on like, I just did exactly that, popped in, and I was like, I'll just try a couple on. If it'd been a busy Saturday and I'd been too hot. I would have been like, ah this is the WORST!

Kiri 51:49

Those two things, busy Saturday, too hot, those are an absolute killer for shopping.

Tom 51:56

Oh its too hot, why is it so claustrophobic, and that like, oh, gotta get back with these bags. Should we go and sit down in a cafe revive? Oh, it's too hot.

Kiri 52:07

What's your relationship like with, do you think about sustainability and things like that when you're, because you, I don't see you, you don't churn through a lot of clothing. I don't see you as a fast fashion guy, but is that something that you think about when you're getting a suit or anything like that?

Tom 52:21

I do try to actually and I do think because I know, the fashion industry is responsible for a lot of pollution, and so my, I mean, it's a very privileged thing to say. But I tried to invest in nicer things and have and buy them less frequently, and so I tried to do that with shoes certainly, and, and suits actually, as well, I don't tend to kind of get, I will wear a suit out before I'll throw it away, I will never throw it away

really, I just keep it just in case or something. But so I try and do that really, and even accessories and stuff I like to have like nice ones that I love. I think, I think it's very, I get it, and it's not my place to ever criticise anybody for you know, buying, buying whatever they want. Anybody can buy whatever they want. But I suppose it's just sometimes worth having it in all of our minds. Like, particularly when, we throw stuff away or just sort of buying, my mum does it, loves to buy, buy me like some T-shirts from a cheaper shop and I'm always like, I would maybe rather have bought like one. But you know, that's, but also I think it's very easy. Like I say, it's very easy for me to say that, and I think as well. We know, we know that people never talk about class really, and my parents are from a very traditional working class background, and I think the idea that maybe this is a very condescending thing to say, they'd probably smash me in the face, but like having treats is a treat, you know, they appreciate it, and so it's very easy for me to go you know, I do, I do all right, and so I can be like, I'm going to invest in high end cotton. But if you can't do that and you want to have a new outfit, then who am I to be like guys, I think you need to think about what this is doing, because who the fuck do I think I am, so I guess it's, I think it will be nice maybe if the fashion industry took a bit more of a stand, that would be, that'd be, I don't think it's, it's a bit unfair to put a lot of, a lot of weight on the, on the consumer who is largely powerless and been you know, wear things that are manufactured.

Kiri 54:36

Totally agree. Is there, your relationship with secondhand, so you used to go to vintage shops when you were younger, do you still like that, whats the best thing you've ever thrifted or got secondhand or charity shop?

Tom 54:48

I'd say probably my dinner jacket was from 1937 is my favourite ever vintage buy. But also I have some lovely vintage pocket squares actually now that people have given me and stuff or, you know, yeah, that just, I've got so many nice vintage ties I really like, and that sort of stuff I like doing because that's, again, if you sort of keep that sort of stamp, like a baseline of like, a few shirts, a few suits, then you can instantly kind of jazz it up and, and reinvent things. So I'm kind of all for that certainly. But yeah, I try to keep an eye on things, and like old fashioned clothing. I think is really exciting, if you find that, like I say a top hat. Which I did find once in a charity shop in Edinburgh.

Kiri 55:32

Do you see your style changing a lot as you get older or do you think, I mean, I think what you have, it's very timeless. I think I could see you in it forever. But how do you feel about that?

Tom 55:44

I, I like it for now. I like the playfulness of it. I like the fact that we're, that I embrace the sort of costume element of clothing. So I suppose I hope I always get to do that, and actually, when you look at someone like someone I've always really loved since I was like about 10 was Elton John, at a time when he wasn't actually very like in the public consciousness at that time, and I love the way that he's always like, yes, and then I'm gonna wear a Versace tracksuit Oh, yes, I'm gonna wear a boiler suit, and I'm going to wear this and like, he's Elton John, he can do that, you know, and he's not the youngest man now, but he still wears whatever he wants, and you kind of go yeah, good on you. So I'd like to be like that. That'd be a nice, nice way to be maybe or, or maybe another end of the spectrum is

that I kind of keep getting more and more formal and sort of dress eventually like the complete David Niven or Cary Grant, it'd be nice to be like Cary Grant wouldn't it?

Kiri 56:39

Yes, yes, please. Is there an item of clothing you can always see yourself wearing then?

Tom 56:46

I suppose yes, a suit I guess, a navy blue suit. I'll probably always wear, it sounds very boring, doesn't it? I think a navy blue suit with a white shirt. Can't, can't go wrong, and yeah, just sort of, yeah not being afraid of it really. I think that's the important thing is just, if you're not afraid of what people are going to say or what, how you're, what you gonna look like when you wear that? You know, that feels, that's part of it.

Kiri 57:12

Penultimate question. Are there any trends that you're hoping never come back?

Tom 57:16

Yep. Bootcut jeans and cargo pants. Definitely. I think don't you? Which was just after, actually I remember the girls at my school would wear Morgan tops, Morgan? were you a fan of Morgan? Not Midgler Morgan, but just Morgan. Yeah. But they would keep the bags afterwards. So they'd be worn as like a school bag.

Kiri 57:44

Quite a statement, and you get battered if you had a Lidl or Aldi bag for your trainers for PE?

Tom 57:50

Did you, did you have Lidl or Aldi when you were at school? You're younger than me Kiri.

Kiri 57:53

One of them had just arrived in town, I believe it was Aldi and people would turn their plastic bags inside out, you know, bags for swimming or whatever. But everyone still could see the orange glow of an Aldi logo under there.

Tom 58:05

That's so funny, isn't it? That's so funny. Yeah, I remember that exactly. Being the case. People were so vile.

Kiri 58:11

Vile is exactly the word. Final question. It's a slightly more sombre one. What outfit would you like to be buried in?

Tom 58:24

White tina tails? Definitely.

Kiri 58:27

Have you got one of those yet?

Tom 58:28

Yeah. I wore it when I did the T's and C's on Strictly, and I had them when I was a teenager because I won the school piano competition, and it meant I got to do a solo in the easter concert which was in the church in Bromley High Street, and my friend, it was also my after school drama teacher Miss Hammond, made it her project to source me a tailcoat and so I wore that, I thought I was Vladimir Ashkenazy walking up the central nave.

Kiri 58:57

You talk, you write about her in your book, which is as you know, a message to you, so brilliant, and the story that you have, when you talk about her in your book. It's gorgeous. So if anyone's listening hasn't, hasn't bought the book yet. Please do it. It's a beautiful read. Tom, thank you so much for chatting to me. I really appreciate it.

Tom 59:13

Kiri Pritchard Shirley MacLaine, it's my pleasure. I thank you very much for having me on your lovely podcast. I've enjoyed this chat so much.

Kiri 59:22

How lovely was that episode? I still laugh about Tom having the same snide kickers as his math teacher. Absolutely brutal stuff. Every time I see a pair of kickers, I laugh a bit to myself. Now when I was listening back to this episode, I do actually wish I'd asked Tom more about his reluctance to do things like you know, he's talking about using a tailor and he says it sort of feels like an extravagance, and then you sort of feel embarrassed that you, you know, like who do you think you are? Why you know, like you've got ideas above your station, I guess, that's so interesting, isn't it, and I think, I feel like lots of us feel like that, like, lots of us deny ourselves small and large luxuries. Because there's a shame attached to it, or do you think maybe it's because we think we don't deserve it, or maybe a combination of all those things? I was thinking about that a lot, basically, and I'm gonna keep thinking about that. Also, I love his don't save anything for best. What do you guys think about that? I mean, the problem is, is people have said it on this podcast before and since, and I always nod vigorously when they do, and then I still end up looking at the beautiful things I own and I think wish I had somewhere nice to wear that. So I'm like, yes, yes, absolutely, preach. But then I'm like, Oh, well, I couldn't possibly wear that. So basically, it looks like I'm gonna be wearing a ball gown to do the recycling. I've got to try and start wearing, because I've got so much lovely stuff that I mean, there isn't any occasion that I can wear them for. So I'm going to endeavour to do a Tom Allen and wear a dinner jacket around the house. Thank you so much for listening and for interacting with us on social media. I normally avoid most interaction on there, because it makes me feel sad. But I feel like we're building like a really lovely wee gang of like minded folks here who love fashion and interesting people and also care about the planet that's coming over more and more. Speaking of said people there's a really great email here. So it reads, I've never said it reads before, but quite like that, So it reads, Hello. Thanks for creating Who are you wearing? It is the podcast I didn't know I needed. As Sophie Hagen put it, I don't know who I am in public. That is exactly how I was feeling about clothes. After a couple of years of wearing

whatever sweatshirt and pair of jeans are cleanest and close to hand. But binge listening WAYW, wayw? How are we gonna say it? Still, still working it out guys, we're only series two. But binge listening wayw? I'm gonna say WAYW, but binge listening WAYW has managed to pull me out of my rut. It's made me feel excited about my wardrobe again, hearing your guests talk about their sartorial choices, and what clothes mean to them has made me look at what I wear with a beady eye. I'm being more honest with myself about, I am being more honest with myself about what I genuinely feel comfortable in, and also thinking about the different ways I can mix and match the lovely things I already have. Thanks again, Dawn. Dawn, what a lush message. I, that is, do you know what, that's something I weirdly didn't anticipate happening. But it's echoed in a lot of the messages that I wanted to talk to people because I think clothes tell a story and I wanted to hear the story behind the clothes. Oh my god, I've just said that out loud in a hotel room in Leeds to myself and I was like, Well, that should have been a fucking tagline shouldn't it? Yeah, I wanted to talk to people about their clothes, because they get so interesting and get some tips, but I wasn't expecting so many people to be, I guess like it rebooting their enthusiasm for clothes and fashion, and also loads of us who maybe loved that when we were growing up or the you know, even in our 20s or something, and then because of work or kids or just our body shape changing or all of the above, the pando have just sort of like, I guess it's slipped down the list, and I guess wearing nice clothes and, and taking care of yourself to tell your story with your clothes is like a another form of self care that I hope we're all remembering to prioritise. I just find it very interesting. So thank you so much for getting in contact. If you want to send us an email, we absolutely buzz off them. You can email whoareyouwearingpod@gmail.com or you can message us on the insta. Now heads up. I never check messages on Insta because I assume there's going to be abuse in there. But wonderful producer Joe does. It's [@whoareyouwearingpod](https://www.instagram.com/whoareyouwearingpod) and we also whack up pictures of our guests on there as well. So go and have a little nose through. Now every week I try and bray about a fashion indie that I think makes great stuff in a cool way and it's usually inspired by the guest I have on. So obviously Tom Allen pretty famous for the suits, obviously you mentioned having a top hat in there. I don't know many ethical Top Hat makers, feel free to get in contact if you know one of them. But as Tom is a fan of a suit, I would like to talk about in many ways, the ultimate suit, the pyjamas. Pyjamas they're so good that you can wear them out and about, so please get to know the wonderful Glasgow based Irregular Sleep Pattern. So they're like vibrant, amazing pyjama suits, the kind of pyjamas that I promise look like they're just cool outfits out and about, they're certified organic cotton pyjamas and they make bedding as well, and they're just stunning, made in small batches in Portugal, by the people making them are paid fairly as well because that's important. The founders and owners Mill and Jolene focus on timeless cuts and designs, and it's really interesting to me, they only introduce new patterns or new colorways when they want to, or when they fancy it or get some inspiration which is so interesting, because traditionally, I think we are all still bonded to that idea, of the fashion calendar of like, different seasons, and so like, Oh, what are we wearing this, you know, this fall season or whatever, or like, what's the summer wardrobe, and the colours change and the styles change, but like that is not sustainable because the trends change, which means the clothes change, which means more, more fashion out in the world, more clothes. So these incredible pyjama suits who've kind of opted out of that by going for something, I think really original and cool and timeless. They just, they're like riots of colour, and pattern. I just, they're one of those things where I'm like, how could you not feel joyful while wearing that, and of course, like they're all gender neutral as well, and it's not just the cotton in their pyjamas and beddings that's kinder to the planet as well. So the garment bags and stickers that they use 100% compostable, the postal pack and tape that they use are 100% recyclable. Once you've

used, once you've taken off the FedEx label off the envelope because FedEx is taking a little time to catch up with that stuff. It's really interesting to me as well. The other things they talk about in like their FAQs, and it's so interesting, where cost and sustainability and I guess moving away from mass manufactured fashion, where it pops up its head where you see it. So for instance, normally when you buy stuff, you get buttons in a little pack, don't you? In a plastic pack on there, and they were like, oh, if you lose a button, like we don't send you out spares, just email us and we'll send it out. But there's no point us sending out loads of buttons with everything. When they probably won't fall off, it's just more waste, and therefore it's more cost, and more. You know, like even the bag is like more plastic in the world. So I was just like, oh god yeah that's so thoughtful, and I hadn't thought about that. Same with them, they're doing like, lots of companies do free returns, which are like, oh, great. But somebody pays for that somewhere, and so what they do instead is they have an incredibly specific list of measurements of you go through that and you do all your measurements, and then you pick the size that fits. Which means that like if we all did that, you pretty much never have to return anything because why don't most of us send it back is because it didn't fit right. Like you know, you can't look at their bright pyjamas and be like, I don't know if that will suit me, you're either someone who wears that stuff or you're not. So once you get the measurements right, you should never need to send it back, and I just thought, I haven't thought about that side of production before so it was really interesting hearing a small sustainable business layout as clearly as that. Also oh my god, I think every item of clothing should have a list of specific measurements, and we should all know our measurements because I cannot be the only one who fits in five different sizes depending on the shop that I'm in. So please send me a message if you're that person otherwise I'm just gonna be like, no you are the only person who can fit in both the size 12 and a size 24, and then both be snug on you. So if you are after a suit with a difference, that is timeless, high quality, high impact that you can wear to bed and then out the house again you don't even have to wash, just roll out, have a nose at Irregular Sleep Pattern because I think their stuff is really cool. Thank you so much again for listening and please join me next week as I chat to actor, comedian, presenter and former catwalk model Michelle de Swarte. Oh my god, it is such a funny one. You're gonna love it. See you next week guys. Who Are You Wearing is produced by Joe Southerd, the artwork is by Mary Phillips and the music is by Annie Glass. This has been a Little Wander production.