

## Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Nicola Coughlan

**JVN** [00:00:01] Welcome to "Getting Curious", I'm Jonathan Van Ness. And every week I sit down for a 40 minute conversation with a brilliant experts to learn all about something that makes me curious. On today's episode, I'm joined by stage and TV actress, advocate and friend Nicola Coughlan, where I ask her: "What's it like to be a booked and busy Irish queen"? Welcome to "Getting Curious", it's Jonathan Van Ness. I'm very excited for this week's episode because we have a very special guest and this is like a really exciting episode because it's kind of diff. But you're, say something that you think would maybe let people in on who you are.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:00:45] Well, some people might know me as the wee lesbian from "Derry Girls".

**JVN** [00:00:48] Oh, my God. I wasn't ready for you to jump out at me like that. So most of you, if you do know who that is. That's gorgeous Nicola Coughlan from Netflix's "Derry Girls", which is also really in the United Kingdom and Ireland, so and so's "Derry Girls"?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:01:08] So Channel 4, it started on.

**JVN** [00:01:09] Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:01:10] As a Channel 4 show that Netflix bought it.

**JVN** [00:01:12] Bought it. So now it is Netflix's.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:01:14] Yeah. And then we were like filming series 2. And it was like a "Hollywood Reporter" article that was like, it's going on Netflix like in a week. And we're like, that's weird. And then we came to New York with Louisa and met you there. And-.

**JVN** [00:01:25] That was the weekend that that happened?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:01:27] It happened like two weeks before. But then we were there like people everywhere we went, they knew who we were.

**JVN** [00:01:31] The Harry Potter weekend?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:01:32] Yeah. The Harry Potter weekend. Yeah. So I was like, this is so crazy. Like in JFK, people came up to me straight away. I was like, this is so weird.

**JVN** [00:01:40] So that would you think that was the weekend where things, where you were like, oh, wow, this is such a big shift this week.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:01:45] I think. Yeah. Because you like you get messages from all over. But then when you see actual human beings in another country that know who you are. And I feel like people in New York were so nice. They come up and are like, love your show and then they go away. And I'm like, that's just so sweet. Thank you.

**JVN** [00:01:58] I think New York gets like a bad rap for that in the sense that, like, you know, you hear like I not ever having really been from New York, I've been living in New York for a couple of years now. But it's like I always thought that people would be, you know, based on movies and TV, like a little gruff, a little like moving super quick.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:02:10] Like yeah get outa here. Like all that kind of stuff.

**JVN** [00:02:12] But they're not. They're so nice.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:02:14] No, they're such cutesy pies. I love them.

**JVN** [00:02:16] I mean, every once in awhile, you can obviously, but anyone can be that anywhere. You never know.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:02:19] Yeah. We've all had those days.

**JVN** [00:02:21] So I was minding my own business this one day in 2018 and I met you on Instagram. I didn't know "Derry Girls" yet. I met you on Instagram because you made this really cute jumper that made me really emotional. And then I started crying when I saw that video and then I put it on my Instastories. And so that's how I met you.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:02:38] Yeah. So like I did, like I think "Derry Girls" had just come out like a little bit before "Queer Eye". And then when "Queer Eye" came out. I was like, oh, this is just like so the best thing. And I loved you so much.

**JVN** [00:02:46] But it wasn't a Netflix. It was the only on Channel 4.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:02:50] Only on Channel 4.

**JVN** [00:02:50] So I couldn't have seen it in America.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:02:51] No, you wouldn't have seen it. No. And then-.

**JVN** [00:02:53] But I would have wanted to have.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:02:55] Yeah, of course.

**JVN** [00:02:57] So I'm obviously a fan now. God. Loves us. You know what I mean?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:03:01] I know.

**JVN** [00:03:02] Ok, so anyway.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:03:02] No, but I saw you and I was like, I feel like that's the soul sister. And I've not met this person, but I love this person. And I'm like a baby who it's getting up in the morning. And on set, you got to get up at like 4:00 in the morning. It's disgusting. And I was like, if I had a picture of this, Jonathan, on a jumper to wear to set I would get up at 4:00 and not be such

a cranky baby. So I made it. And then I couldn't find one, so I made it and it came. And then I put it on Instagram. And then you saw it. I was like, oh, my God. And then we, like, started messaging.

**JVN** [00:03:27] So I am shocked that you're not a morning person.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:03:32] You're kidding. Really? I'm not.

**JVN** [00:03:34] I'm not kidding.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:03:35] I'm known for like the drivers who put me up for work, like I'll get in with my pillow and I'm like, I'm just quiet. I think. I'm just sleepy.

**JVN** [00:03:41] I'm be so happy in the morning.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:03:44] You are, I know, with your coffee dances.

**JVN** [00:03:47] I think it was like a literal like, "Oh, my God, I can't believe I woke up"! Like yes!

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:03:50] I feel like that this morning because I was sick yesterday and I woke up feeling so good this morning. They let you just smile to myself on my bed like, that's a great feeling.

**JVN** [00:03:57] I love that. Ok but now. But this is the point of today's episode. Oh, I have 18,000 questions.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:02] Yes.

**JVN** [00:04:03] One, you're from?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:06] Galway.

**JVN** [00:04:06] In?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:07] West of Ireland. The Republic of Ireland.

**JVN** [00:04:09] Yes. So you're in. But you're from Ireland?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:11] Yes.

**JVN** [00:04:12] Literally.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:13] Literally Ireland.

**JVN** [00:04:13] You are born and raised in Ireland.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:16] I was born in a hospital called the Portiuncula. Try and say that six times fast.

**JVN** [00:04:19] So because, you know, here's one thing I didn't know about Ireland when I just, because I got to go to Dublin for like a day.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:24] You did, I know.

**JVN** [00:04:24] When I was just a little bit ago and I didn't know, this might make me seem thick, but I didn't know that there was like the different language in Ireland.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:34] I love that you just said "thick" because I feel like that means we've brought you over here. I feel like you're getting all the little words.

**JVN** [00:04:39] I am!

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:39] And well it's making me really happy.

**JVN** [00:04:39] "Thick" means like dense America.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:04:43] Yeah. And you said something like, "Do you fancy him"? the other day and I was like, "Oh, my God. Look at you". Yes. So there's a different language, Irish. And so if I spoke a little bit [Irish]. I think I just said on the wrong grammar. But it's fine. No one will know.

**JVN** [00:05:00] I didn't know you were bilingual.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:02] I mean, not really. I mean, it's awful.

**JVN** [00:05:04] No, you just have to learn-. Is it, is it, is it not Gaelic?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:07] It's, so we call it Irish.

**JVN** [00:05:08] Oh, my God. Oh.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:09] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:05:09] Oh, my God. I'm so-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:14] Just not in the microphone, don't-. It's not worth it.

**JVN** [00:05:19] No, it's Irish.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:20] No, it's fine. No, because you hear that.

**JVN** [00:05:20] How dare me?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:21] How dare you. Get out of the room.

**JVN** [00:05:24] Fucking British colonizer and Ireland.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:25] Stop talking about Brexit again.

**JVN** [00:05:30] I didn't know what to call it. You're right. So Irish.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:32] It's ok. So Irish we call it. Yes.

**JVN** [00:05:32] Yes. So you do learn that in school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:34] You learn it in school. So I learned it from like 4 to 17. And then I, I mean, I understand it. But then I got really like embarrassed to try and speak it because I'd fuck it up. Which I just did.

**JVN** [00:05:44] Can you say anything in Spanish?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:46] No.

**JVN** [00:05:47] Okay. So but in Spanish. Okay. Okay. Really quickly.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:05:50] Okay.

**JVN** [00:05:50] So in Spanish, there's like this thing with the conjugating verbs, right? Where you're like it's like, you know, like if we were to do, you know, "cantar", to sing.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:02] Uh uh.

**JVN** [00:06:02] "I sing" is, you know, "yo canto", like "you sing" is like "canta". Like "she sings" or "he sings" like "canta". If like "we sing" is like "cantamos". So that's how, so how do you conjugate in Irish?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:15] Oh God. OK.

**JVN** [00:06:16] How's that work?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:17] Oh god. So it's "canadh" in Irish which is weirdly similar, um-.

**JVN** [00:06:22] Ok, that's called a cognates.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:24] Yeah. So totally. [Irish] means you're singing.

**JVN** [00:06:27] Interest.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:28] Yeah. And [Irish] me singing, [Irish] you're, you're like as a group singing.

**JVN** [00:06:33] What about we're singing?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:35] Oh my god I didn't know-. This is like my Irish oral exam.

**JVN** [00:06:40] No, so like in Spanish. It's like the conjugations like [Spanish] there's like a cute-, or like [Spanish].

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:48] Oh my god. I did French in school too.

**JVN** [00:06:50] You did?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:50] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:06:52] Ok, let's talk about, wait. So standby. Part of the one of the questions I want to ask. What's it like to be from Ireland?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:06:57] Cute. I like it. So the place I'm from, Galway, is sort of the friendly city in the world by Lonely Planet. Which I'm very proud of. Yeah. It's a teeny tiny little city.

**JVN** [00:07:06] How many people are from there?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:08] Oh my god, I don't know. You asked me this before but I forgot.

**JVN** [00:07:09] I did?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:10] Yeah, but I don't even know because I'm so bad with numbers.

**JVN** [00:07:12] Should we Google it?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:12] Yeah, I Googled it 'cause I don't know. Like I remember it being like I remember how you were in my university in 2007. That's not right.

**JVN** [00:07:20] What's the name of it? It's-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:20] Galway. G-a-l-w-a-y.

**JVN** [00:07:22] Gorgeous.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:22] So it's like a little city on the west coast of Ireland, we're right in the Atlantic. So a lot of rain. And and it's you know, it's, but it's very cute. It's a lovely place to be from.

**JVN** [00:07:31] Galway, Ireland. Population and 79,000 in 2016 it says.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:39] Oh my God. Yeah. Okay.

**JVN** [00:07:40] That's kind of big.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:41] I mean but it's spread out like the actual-.

**JVN** [00:07:43] It's spread out.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:44] Middle of the city is super small. You could walk in like five minutes.

**JVN** [00:07:46] She's really pretty.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:47] It's pretty, isn't it? I'll bring you there. My mom will be dying to meet you.

**JVN** [00:07:50] So, you know, like when I think about like America.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:07:53] Yes.

**JVN** [00:07:53] I think big proportion sizes. I think extreme patriotism. I think Fourth of July, honey, I'm thinking founding fathers. I'm thinking like, you know, turkey on Thanksgiving. Like what are the things that?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:08:05] 1776.

**JVN** [00:08:07] Yes, 1776. I'm thinking like but I'm also thinking like, you know, I, slavery comes to mind like a lot of like upsetting things comes up and there's like a pain body that is like being American, you know, it's like-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:08:17] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:08:17] Or just like being aware of like the things that if like happened in America, like, you know, there's some really amazing things like it can be land of the free and home of the brave, but it can also have other things like it's just like everyone, I think in America has like their own idea of like the cultural, you know, pain that anyone has been through, like from coming from there. So, like, you know, Eckhart Tolle, he talks about like the pain body. Like what's like pain-, like what's, what's the pain body of like Ireland? Like what's like to be from Ireland? Like what's.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:08:41] So.

**JVN** [00:08:42] What's the deal?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:08:43] It's like. I mean, it is always things you're super proud of that where you're from. And then this bit things go, oh, god. Like the moment. Let's start with the negative. But there's a huge homelessness issue in Ireland and it's this real shame thing. And then there was like the two referendums that we fought for marriage equality and for for choice for women. Those were two really big things. And that was a really proud moment of like fighting for those. And I campaigned for both of those. But it's like the people that kicked back against those, it was very vicious. And I think, like, we see the rise of the right. All across the world right now. But in Ireland, it became like there were certain points, especially during the the choice referendum where I was in a play at the Donmar Warehouse here in London. And I was like any active about it and I'm going to really do all this stuff. And then one day, like, I just felt really ill, 'cause I think I was getting so much trolling online and all that about all this stuff that our stage manager, Sarah, sat me down and was like, stop. You got to stop because you're just going to get ill and you're going to-. So knowing of that amount of vitriol and all that stuff is pretty gross.

**JVN** [00:09:37] What year was that?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:09:38] That was last-. No, that was 20-, 2018. 2018.

**JVN** [00:09:43] So '18 was women's or people's women's autonomy to choose people's right to choose.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:09:49] Yes, yes.

**JVN** [00:09:50] For, you know, their reproductive health and for abortion. And then in 2014 was when Ireland passed marriage equality wasn't it?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:09:55] Was it 2014 or 2015?

**JVN** [00:09:58] '14. I think it was, it, I feel like, I think I research just when I was in Dublin, I think I was '14. But the point is that Ireland was the first country to pass same sex marriage by popular vote.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:10:07] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:10:07] Not by like court, you know, ruling or it was by popular vote.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:10:11] Nope, by the people.

**JVN** [00:10:11] Which is a really incredible. I think, you know, when you think about Ireland, you know, having been historically, Cath-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:10:17] Yeah, really Catholic country. People, but people are funny, like they view it as we often do. I mean, we view it like we see it in movies and stuff. So like people be like, oh, is it just there's just like four potatoes that you all share and then all the babies drink whiskey? You're like, not really. But it was like that time, like I went door-to-door campaigning with my sister for it. And then, it also I think sometimes makes you question your own prejudices. 'Cause sometimes we'd knock on a door and like some older man would open it. I was like, he's gonna be a bigot. And it's awful because you've made these assumptions and you're like, well, I am so tuned in and then you'd speak to them and they totally wouldn't be, they'd be open. And you go, Oh, my God, I was just deciding what their views were gonna be. That's just as bad, like that's terrible.

**JVN** [00:10:57] So because your advocacy and your outspokenness are on both of these issues, because I mean, I followed you on Twitter when I met you on the 'Gram and on Instagram way back when.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:11:06] Yes.

**JVN** [00:11:06] And so I've seen you be, a, or you know, advocate in your space. And then when I saw "Derry Girls", it's absolutely like blow up, which has been so exciting and it's like such a good show. And you're doing so many things and I've always looked up to you advo-, your activism and your advocacy ever since I've met you.



**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:11:19] Thank you.

**JVN** [00:11:19] And so, you know, I think it's really cool you've been able to do that as your profile has risen. Speaking about going door-to-door, though, when you're advocating for Same-Sex Marriage in Ireland, did you ever have an experience like you had to like? Like, do you ever convince someone? And was it ever successful?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:11:37] Yeah, it was amazing. I mean, people. There's so much scaremongering things. I think that's the problem with the way that elections have gone nowadays. And everything is such a binary. And they like you either this or this. And there's literally nothing in between. And we're just fighting one another. And I think what it is about having those conversations. I mean, I'm totally guilty of it, of going on Twitter me like I believe this thing. And then when some question you, you just want to be like "blah".

**JVN** [00:12:00] Yeah.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:12:00] But I think if you go to someone's front door of their house, you've got to be willing to listen and talk back. And I think that's a huge thing that's missing in the world right now. But yeah, there was some people were like, well, I don't see why. I just wanted to change marriage. And you go, OK, that's valid if you think that. But you know, it won't. And it's just this is what this person wants to do. And, you know, you, it's just, it's just about listening to people and going, what's your concerns? OK, I hear them. Let's see if I can help you out with that. But yeah, we did.

**JVN** [00:12:24] What were the concerns?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:12:25] That it would change the institution of marriage-.

**JVN** [00:12:28] Sorry.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:12:29] No. Again, it would change the institution of marriage, that it would like make their, I don't know like, there was some really ignorant stuff like someone was like "what's stopping people marrying their car"? And my friend Davy. He was there at my party the other night.

**JVN** [00:12:38] Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:12:39] He was like. And he was like, OK. He's like, "well, between, for me". He was like, "you know, marriage is between two consenting adults but clearly for you, it's between a man and something he wants to have sex with".

**JVN** [00:12:49] Oh, yes, I see. Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:12:51] I was like that's incredible.

**JVN** [00:12:53] Oh. Oh, my gosh. So that is just like a funny like a visual aid to give everyone. So I have my back to the recording booth glass of this room that Nicola and I are in. And I think that our friend Emily has been wildly waving the break's sign for minutes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:13:08] Sorry.

**JVN** [00:13:09] Nicola just saw it so but anyway. We're going to take a really break, we're going to be right back with more Nicola Coughlan right after this. And we're "Getting Curious". Welcome back to "Getting Curious". This is Jonathan Van Ness. We have Nicola Coughlan, star of "Derry Girls". She is a trained actress and theater extraordinaire. Also a dear friend. And also, you're a gorgeous Irish person.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:13:29] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:13:29] And I was like curious, like what it is to, you know, come from Ireland and obviously all the other things and advocacy as well. And so that's where we were.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:13:37] Yes.

**JVN** [00:13:37] Is we were talking about that. So. But you were, you'd change the hearts and minds of like people that you met, like in real life.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:13:42] Which is amazing. And that's much more important. I mean, I totally agree that we live in an echo chamber when it comes to the Internet, even though I think the more followers you get online, it's much harder because people get really vitriolic towards you and stuff. And even I was lucky enough. I visited a children's hospice right before Christmas, because I was asked, I did a TV show, which is not gonna be out till the new year. Like a quiz show, which I had to choose a charity to promote. And I got really overwhelmed. I was like, every charity is valid. Oh, my God. Who do I give the money to? And my nieces nephews are like my life. So I was like if anything happened to them, I don't know what I do so there's one children's hospice in Ireland called LauraLynn, if anyone's considering ever donating to them. They're incredible. But I went to visit them and and an amazing time. But then the other day, someone started attacking me over it. It was like, well, you want women to have abortions, how dare you? And I tagged in the children's hospice and stuff like that is like and I don't really get rattled very often, but that I was like, that's so grim, that you've done that. You know, like, I don't know. But, you know, there's all sorts of people online. And I'm like, you know, I actually went out and did something and you just sat at home attacking me. So.

**JVN** [00:14:44] So how do you deal with that?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:14:45] I think you can't take it too seriously. I don't actually let much of it get on me. And.

**JVN** [00:14:50] But it does. Like it fucks me up.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:14:52] Sometimes, yeah.

**JVN** [00:14:53] That would fuck me up, there's been like. I mean, I think think for me the. I mean I. Yeah. Those instances, it really messed me up. And I do think the ability of like being selectively permeable, like not holding those negative experiences in too close because you do do so much work.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:15:07] Yeah. If you're going to take it all in like that it will just wreck you. There's some days where I think I'm invincible and then I'm like, I feel really crap. Is that why? Because I've been letting people shout at me because I've always had like, I remember one of my teachers in school was like, you have a really, she's said in my report. She's like, she's got a really keen moral sense. She also said she doesn't like anything boring, and I was like, oh my god, so true.

**JVN** [00:15:27] That's true.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:15:28] You had it.

**JVN** [00:15:28] Things don't change.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:15:29] I really get bored so easily like meh. Um. But yeah, I've always had like a thing between right and wrong. I'm like, even I got a fight with the priest when I was a kid.

**JVN** [00:15:37] You did?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:15:37] I did.

**JVN** [00:15:38] IRL?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:15:39] Yeah. He came into our class. And we have this thing called the Trocaire box, which is basically every Lent season before Easter. You collect money. If you want to eat-. If you give up chocolate-.

**JVN** [00:15:48] In the school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:15:49] Yeah. You bring it home. You bring the box home. So if you want to, like eat your chocolate, you put like, you know, a pound as it was at that time in the box or whatever. And then the priest came in and he was like, you have to give the box back to your local church. And I was like, put my hand up. I was like, my parents don't, they give it to this church because I went to a different church and then the priest is like, no. And I was like, surely, it doesn't matter where the money is coming from, it's where the money's going to these poor children. And I got in so much trouble with him and with the teacher. But then that's how my personality has been for the, for the rest of my life. I just hate, like, bullshit and hypocrisy. I'm like, no, it's going to poor people. It does matter how much you were church raised like meh.

**JVN** [00:16:22] So in Ireland, did you go to a public school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:16:25] I went to most of them are public schools. So not not fee paying. It's very it's a really rare thing to have a fee paying school. So when I came to England and they

were like, are you like middle class or working class? I was like, I've never thought about that. It's weird to me.

**JVN** [00:16:37] People ask that?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:16:38] They're so into it here. Have they not like.? Yeah.

**JVN** [00:16:40] No.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:16:40] Yeah. When I went to drama school here, I moved over 2008 and they would be like, yeah, well, I'm really working class. Like what? We just don't have that clear delineation of class as much in Ire-. It's obviously there's richer and poor and all this stuff, but it's not as much in the culture.

**JVN** [00:16:53] What about separation of church and state? Like is it? So you pray and stuff at school like there'll be like a priest at school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:16:58] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**JVN** [00:16:59] So Ireland's like a very like at the governmental level there's like Catholicism like all up in the government?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:17:04] It's a big, I think it's a big thing. I think it needs to be like we need to examine it especially through schools because like I was raised Catholic and then when I was like 17 I was like. Not for me, not not my thing. You know, I'm just not gonna do this anymore. And thankfully, my mom was like pretty fine about it. But yeah, it's a kids like they have to be baptized in order to go to school. And so it's like and the Catholic schools are like the good schools and I don't like, yeah, that side of it.

**JVN** [00:17:27] So is there like, is there like, is there, like what about like Buddhist kids? Or is there Buddhist kids in Ireland?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:17:34] There was one girl in my class who was Bahai. So her parents were from Iran. But we, like loved that. Like, I can't even describe to you by how like, like your school is just all these white kids. So then this girl, Sahar. Heloo Sahar if you're listening because I still see her in the shop when I go home. But like when she came in, we're like, oh, my God, it's so exciting. Like, you're so different to us and all this stuff. But it was very rare. I mean, I feel like I didn't meet a Jewish person until I was like 19.

**JVN** [00:17:57] So there was no Jewish kids in school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:17:58] No, no.

**JVN** [00:18:00] So it was kind of like everyone. So just like so but you know, when you're telling me about the-. Like what is like the cultural pain body for like for an Irish person when you think about like how people talk about Ireland or how, you know, you see Ireland being perceived as an Irish person like who's, you know, from Ireland.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:18:16] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:18:16] And you mentioned it's like, oh, like they're be four potatoes and like, you know, like the babies with the whiskey or whatever. So it's like, is that, you know, what is it? What is that? And do you perceive a lot of that? Like, is that perception of Ireland is like-?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:18:29] Huge.

**JVN** [00:18:30] Yeah.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:18:30] Big time. Like I've heard people say, like, I don't think they realize how bad it can be sometimes. Sometimes people will say, like "throwing a party" is like an English phrase, which means like when, you know, Irish people will get like drunken, raucous and badly behaved. And I'm like, oh, maybe, don't say that. That's not the best. Like-

**JVN** [00:18:45] Because it's stereotypical, like rude thing.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:18:47] Yeah, and I'm like that's not great and people don't real-. It was a friend of mine, he said, and I was like, we don't really say that anymore, you know? It's okay. But just maybe not again.

**JVN** [00:18:53] Yeah.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:18:54] And people like assume that I'm like, not educated and I'm like, I've got, you know, a bachelors degree. I studied English and classics. I've got my masters degree. And, you know, I'm an educated person. But people go like you're Irish. You don't, you know, you're, you don't have and I'm like, I've got an education. Like, I'm, I'm smart like I'm-. But it's just this thing of like this old, I'm going to show you like these old English cartoons of like the Irish where they said your school shapes aren't right. So, it mean, it means we're more dumb than the English and stuff. There were like all these things about, because they didn't want us to have an independent nation.

**JVN** [00:19:23] Yeah. So yeah. So what are the-. Okay. So how do you understand, like so you know because like I learned in school about like you know how the things that we learn about like American school, which like-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:19:31] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:19:32] Albeit a lot of it's super fucked up. So that's not what I'm trying to have.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:19:35] Yeah yes.

**JVN** [00:19:35] Like how, like what's it that gorgeous like Irish pride like because essentially we didn't Ireland have like it's own Brexit like. But like, you know there's like, because like didn't Britain like used to like govern Ireland.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:19:45] Yes.

**JVN** [00:19:45] And they were like they had their own referendum but like it was like a war that took like eleven years or something.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:19:50] It was more like we were like get out and we were like yeah, it was a big war.

**JVN** [00:19:53] When was it?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:19:54] Oh, god. I'm going to get these dates horribly wrong.

**JVN** [00:19:57] We could maybe have a historian tell us, like, what do you think you remember from school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:00] What do I remember from school. Oh, god. Okay. So the Easter Rising was in 1916 where basically-

**JVN** [00:20:06] Oh! That was recently.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:07] Yeah. So it was like a bunch of Irish rebels, Michael Collins, James Connolly. They took over these various points in Dublin. So like the GPO, the post office like and the biscuit factory.

**JVN** [00:20:17] Wait, my mic just went out, here is it.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:19] Yeah. They took over all these main buildings in Dublin and was like basically get out like one of the British.

**JVN** [00:20:25] In 1916?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:25] 1916. Yeah. A lot of Irish people didn't fight in the wars because we were like, we would like our own independent nation. We could rule ourselves so, so people although my uncle did fight in World War Two, just as a side note, some people were like, no Irish people fought. I'm like, yes, they did, because one of my family did. He died a prisoner of war.

**JVN** [00:20:41] In World War Two?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:42] Yes.

**JVN** [00:20:43] But wait.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:44] That's a whole other thing. So many tangents.

**JVN** [00:20:44] 1916.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:45] 1916, the rising happened.

**JVN** [00:20:47] So up until 1916 Ireland was part of Britain?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:51] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:20:51] Honey, I thought the Troubles were like in 1200 or something. They took for 700 years of something.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:20:55] No. We call it like 600 years of oppression. I feel really bad for the English people recording this right now.

**JVN** [00:21:00] It's ok, no big deal. We're obsessed with the United Kingdom, I love it.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:21:00] Don't worry, I forgive you. I forgive you. I know it wasn't you who did the famine.

**JVN** [00:21:06] Yeah. It wasn't-. Oh.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:21:10] There's a whole, I mean there's so much.

**JVN** [00:21:10] Wait. The British had something to do with the famine.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:21:13] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:21:13] What?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:21:13] So basically all the potato crops, they failed in Ireland because they didn't know about, I don't think I remember what the thing is. But basically you're meant to rest the land in between times, you're not meant to grow the same crop in the same land. And they didn't know that.

**JVN** [00:21:24] Oh, yeah. So the whole like corn and soybean. Corn, then soybean.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:21:26] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:21:27] I just learned about that the other day.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:21:28] Yes. You meant to alternate the crops, but they were really poor and didn't. So they kept planting and then the whole potato crop failed. But the British basically refused to send the grain over. And then there was like Quakers that came over and they were like, if your name was like Jonathan O'Ness, like you're Irish, and they would say, okay, you dropped the O from your name and you convert to our religion and will feed you. We'll give you the soup.

**JVN** [00:21:49] Oh, wait, Irish people did that to Quakers?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:21:52] Yeah. The Quakers came to Ireland and we're like, we'll take care of you, will feed you, but you just renounce your religion. And we're gonna take we're going to anglicized your name.

**JVN** [00:21:59] Oh.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:21:59] So it's like if you're Jonathan O'Ness, we're gonna take the "O" off and you just become Jonathan Ness the Quaker. Because like they'll give you soup. So if you're seen as an Irish person taking things from the English, despite your own nation, it's still called "taking the soup".

**JVN** [00:22:13] Because were English people Quakers or-?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:14] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:22:15] Oh they were?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:15] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:22:16] Interest.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:17] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:22:17] Well it's not "interest" but like. You know what I'm saying.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:19] Yeah, it's wild, isn't it?

**JVN** [00:22:20] That was post, that was like between the 1840 and like?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:22] That was the famine, yes. God I can't believe the exact, I'm terrible for dates.

**JVN** [00:22:24] So then. So is that how you learned about it in school? Or did your family tell you this?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:28] You learn about it.

**JVN** [00:22:28] Oh, you learn about it in school.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:29] You learn about in the school. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah you do. You do.

**JVN** [00:22:31] So you learn about it in school.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:32] Yeah. And then that's why I like a lot of accents. Super interesting 'cause I know you like accents. So we, the Irish like we went in our droves over to the states, and the states was like a wonderful place, for the Irish people like welcomed us in and took us because like the exodus of people that went over and like the coffin ships and stuff and died on the ships and went through Ellis Island and all of this. But our accents are a huge foundation of what the American accent is today, because if you notice, okay, how do you say the word C.A.R.

**JVN** [00:22:58] Car.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:22:59] Okay. How does an English person say it?



**JVN** [00:23:02] Um, car.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:23:03] Yes, an Irish person says "car".

**JVN** [00:23:07] Oh.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:23:07] So that's what they call a "rhotic r", that letter. So we, like there's way more structural similarities between an Irish accent, we're generalizing, Irish accent and the US accent than there is English and American.

**JVN** [00:23:19] Interest. I always thought that British accents were kind of like, like reminding me you like southern accents.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:23:25] Oh I thin-, I know what you mean. That's sort of this type of lan-.

**JVN** [00:23:29] Yeah.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:23:29] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**JVN** [00:23:30] So they have like their own very like, you know, specific like thing. So but then in 1916 like the people in Dublin took over and then-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:23:35] Yeah. And it didn't work. But then they basically the British army captured a lot of the leaders of the, of the rebellion and kill them and commit in jail, oh my god. I hope I'm getting this right. I should like have Wikipedia-ed before I came in. Now we're going to talk about all this.

**JVN** [00:23:50] I'm sorry.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:23:51] I'm going to be like, "And Oprah was there, and Cyndi Lauper performed". No, but they shot a lot of like the leaders of the rebellion.

**JVN** [00:23:59] Oh that's not funny.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:23:59] Which turned them into martyrs.

**JVN** [00:24:01] That took such a serious turn. It was like Oprah was there, Cyndi Lauper performed.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:24:02] I know, it was just bad. And then the basically then there's-. Because a lot of Irish people didn't support them initially. They're like, you're just causing trouble. But then when the British army, like, murdered them, they were like, oh, shit, actually. And it kind of drummed up support for it. And then I think we had our first-. So the first female MP in Westminster was a lady called Constance Markievicz. She was an Irish Republican. She refused to take her seat in Westminster and, 'cause she wanted to form her own government in Ireland, which they eventually did. But then there was this Conservative MP, I can't remember who it was, recently that was like, "Oh, the first woman elected to government was like Nancy Astor, who was like this

Nazi". And I was like, no, it wasn't. It was literally an Irish woman who wanted a free Irish state. But like, yeah. We have so many tangents we could go down.

**JVN** [00:24:46] No, so-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:24:49] Yeah. Constance Markievicz, amazing.

**JVN** [00:24:50] So she was the first-?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:24:51] First female MP.

**JVN** [00:24:52] And she, did she start the government in Ireland?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:24:56] Yeah, her. Like it was like a group of them together that started it. And then, god, I can't remember it.

**JVN** [00:25:00] So Ireland only gained its independence. Oh, oh, my golly mazes. We're going to take a really quick break. We'll be right back with more right after this. Welcome back to "Getting Curious" with Jonathan Van Ness, honey. We have Nicola Coughlan, so tell me who knew that Ireland was such a young, gorgeous nation.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:25:20] But then, like our ancient history is like it was like a really Celtic pagan age. Remember I told you about like ferry forts and stuff?

**JVN** [00:25:25] Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:25:25] There was that thing. Catholicism came in and was like, no, none of that. And then the British, you know, came in and we're like none of this. And then eventually, like a lot of our like old names and traditions got brought back with like the birth of the new nation. So like, a lot of our names like Effa and Maeve and, you know, all this stuff like Orla, all these names came back and are like traditional sports and, you know, bringing back our language because the British wanted to get rid of Irish. They wanted to repress the language. And that came back, made it's own rebirth.

**JVN** [00:25:52] Resurgence. I loved that.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:25:54] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:25:55] OK. So I'm obsessed with that. But we also kind of like much forgiven Britain, like we're super down. We love, because then-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:00] No, I mean, I live here.

**JVN** [00:26:02] You live here.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:02] You met my friends.

**JVN** [00:26:03] Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:04] All my little British friends.

**JVN** [00:26:06] Everyone, and I'm obsessed with all of them.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:06] Yes.

**JVN** [00:26:07] So then you realize when you're a baby. So you like come up in Ireland, you're learning interesting things about history, then you're like, oh my God, love it here. This town's really cute. Love my fam, things are fun. And then you like walking down the street in like sixth grade or something and you're like, oh, my God, I think I want to be an actress.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:25] Okay. Do you know what my first job was?

**JVN** [00:26:26] No.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:26] I was nine years old.

**JVN** [00:26:27] You were?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:28] I will find it for you, like online. So I went to an audition when I was nine with-

**JVN** [00:26:32] In Dublin?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:33] In Galway.

**JVN** [00:26:34] In Galway!

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:34] Yeah, with James Brolin, Barbra Streisand's husband.

**JVN** [00:26:39] Wow.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:26:40] Yeah. I did like not know who that was or who, like I've said, since I became obsessed with Barbra Streisand massively. But it's like that guy got like bushy eyebrows, like. And I auditioned for the part and I didn't get it. But they were like we want you in for like a little scene and you're gonna go and go and you're gonna feed swans. So that was like my first job. And I got the day off school, I got paid. I like got, I think they like brushed my hair. I was like fancy. So I was like, this is obviously the job I want. Clearly. So that was my first ever job.

**JVN** [00:27:04] How did you find out about it?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:27:06] My drama teacher at school there was like looking for kids.

**JVN** [00:27:09] And they were like, "Oh, that little Nicola. She's a little precocious, little cute smiley girl".

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:27:13] Yeah. She's like, classic youngest child.

**JVN** [00:27:16] Were you a little, no wait no, I saw pictures of you. Yeah. You were like, it was like, it was like that gorgeous like, you're like a dark blonde.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:27:22] Yeah. Like a dark-. I remember it being like very shiny. I remember it like, I used to be obsessed. You know the Brady Bunch movies? When Marcia would brush her hair.

**JVN** [00:27:26] Yes of course, I loved that part.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:27:28] Yeah. Yes. So that was like, I used to do that at home. Like brush my hair all the time.

**JVN** [00:27:31] So you realized after that experience that you wanted to be an actress.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:27:34] I think I always wanted to be. I used to get up when I was like five and rewatch "The Wizard of Oz" again and again and again. And I want to be like Judy Garland. And I was 6, I used to watch "Beaches". And I wanted to be Bette Midler.

**JVN** [00:27:43] Loved "Beaches".

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:27:43] Loved "Beaches". Like so, and I wanted to be like that like. And I realized when I grew up there, like, did you wanna be Disney Princesses? Like, no, I clearly wanted to be a gay icon, but I didn't know that they were gay icons. I was like all of those like women. I really wanted to be like. But yeah. Not so much a Disney princess.

**JVN** [00:27:58] So then you move because-, how did you get from Galway to theatre school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:28:04] So I always-.

**JVN** [00:28:06] And all of your studies because you had like 18 million degrees, when we're talking about that a second ago.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:28:09] I know I, I've my poor parents. I was like, I want to do this now. And they're like, stop. I think cause I was the youngest. I got that little bit more leeway. I was like the last one in a long line, so they were like, ok, whatever. I, I was working actually acting through, when I was in school but I never told anybody. Because I think I remember. Do you remember the era of like Britney, Christina. You know, Jessica Simpson?

**JVN** [00:28:29] Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:28:29] I think I read this interview, Jessica Simpson, where she was like, I had a recording contract, but I told my friends and none of them believed me and they thought I was a liar. So I was like, okay, I can't tell anybody that I have acting jobs because they're going to think I'm a liar. So I kept it completely secret. So I used to go and get days off school. And do you like voice over for cartoons and come back and just like not tell anybody about it.

**JVN** [00:28:48] Oh, my God, I love that.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:28:49] Yeah. I just I can't remember, like when you're a teenager. Like a lot of things are very embarrassing. I found an old diary. I was like, oh, my God, I was carrying bread in front of this cute guy. I want to die. And I was like, why was that embarrassing? I don't relate.

**JVN** [00:29:00] You're like, I love bread.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:29:00] Love bread. That's not embarrassing to carry bread.

**JVN** [00:29:02] Everything does feel embarrassing and-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:29:04] It does.

**JVN** [00:29:04] I feel like when you're younger.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:29:05] And I feel like because you'd make the cartoons, but they wouldn't come out for like two years, they're like, when can I see it? This is pre Internet, everyone having Internet. So it was like maybe see it in Sweden in two years, I don't know. And, um, but then I did get like outed as being an actor because I did this short movie called "A Phantom Cannot". Which you can find on YouTube I'm going to show it to you is like three minutes long. And they played it before this Colin Farrell movie in the cinemas. So everyone at school was like, why were you in a film? And I was like, ah, I'm really embarrassed.

**JVN** [00:29:35] And then you were outed.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:29:36] And then I was outed as an actor.

**JVN** [00:29:36] As an actor.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:29:37] I know.

**JVN** [00:29:39] So but, so you did that. So you're already really kind of working as an actress, like in school.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:29:43] Yes.

**JVN** [00:29:44] And then you moved to London because you went to like, didn't like you went like, I think you like having a theater experience in school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:29:48] So, I did. Yeah, I wrote a play. A play about Britney Spears in which I played Britney Spears. I told you. It was based around the European MTV Awards, a Britney, Christina, we're fighting against each other. They're like, it's a tie. You've got to do a dance off. So like Britney and Christina did a dance off. Which I choreographed. And then "Daphne and Celeste". Do you remember them?

**JVN** [00:30:11] No.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:30:15] "Ooh stick you. Your mama too, and your daddy!" You don't remember them?

**JVN** [00:30:16] I don't think we had them.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:30:16] Oh, my God, it's so good. Ok, but they were presenting. And then it was like, who's going to win? Britney. Christina. And then an Irish folk singer called Mary Black was the joke at the end. I thought I was in SNL.

**JVN** [00:30:26] What an original.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:30:28] I was twelve. It was my writing career peaked very early. Yeah. So I did that play. But no, then I went to university after school because I was only 17 leaving school. I was a baby. So I studied English and classical civilization.

**JVN** [00:30:40] In university?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:30:41] In university. And I also did a year studying abroad in Malta, lived in Malta for a year.

**JVN** [00:30:46] Oh, interesting. I feel like Queen Elizabeth loves it there.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:30:48] She did. That was her, she said it was her favorite place she ever lived with Philip. Yeah, she loved it.

**JVN** [00:30:54] Do you watch "The Crown"?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:30:55] I love "The Crown". I was about to say who I really fancy on "The Crown". I don't want to say. I don't want to say on. But I'll tell you afterwards.

**JVN** [00:31:01] Oh.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:31:03] Can you see?

**JVN** [00:31:04] Whenever I think I can whisper to the microphone, Emily always has to like delete out because she can always very clearly hear everything that I think that the microphone can't hear.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:31:13] Just cause the acting world is so small and I will run into them and I then I'll be like.

**JVN** [00:31:15] She's such a bitch, Pop pop ba da da. Ok but wait. So I thought I guess I thought the you like went to like. Or no. Well I guess you just like had, were you doing just doing lots of plays?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:31:28] No, I like. So through university I'm still doing like little bits of voiceover but nothing much and still felt quite embarrassed to be like I'm going to be an actor.

"Cause you're like I don't know anyone that's done that as an actual career and it's embarrassing. But then I finished university and I applied for drama school and did terribly.

**JVN** [00:31:46] But you did go to drama school?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:31:47] I did.

**JVN** [00:31:47] Because I was like feeling like a bad journalist for a sec because I was asking you about drama school and you didn't go? No. So you did go?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:31:52] I did. I went to the Oxford School of Drama. I did their foundation course. Claire Foy. Went there. Yes.

**JVN** [00:31:57] Bitch.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:31:57] I know.

**JVN** [00:31:58] She's not a bitch. She's like that bitch.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:31:59] Yeah. She's I've never met her, but she was like the girl when I was there. And like this girl, Claire Foy, she's gonna be huge. This was a long time before "The Crown" or anything but yeah, she's so amazing. She's brilliant. So she went there. I did like a foundation work for six months. Did not get then back in into their full time course.

**JVN** [00:32:14] Ew.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:32:14] Went home. I was a receptionist in a physio clinic. I had a lot of very interesting jobs.

**JVN** [00:32:20] You need some kind of kinesio tape?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:32:22] Yes. I used to hear people like shouting in the room. I had my own little office and I used to hear people like getting their back crack and they'd be like, "Ah"!

**JVN** [00:32:30] No.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:32:30] Yeah, and I used to like, yeah. I used to leave "The Food Network" on all the time. And I was like "do to do" on my computer and that's my job. And then I got back into drama school to do a Masters course in Birmingham. It's now called Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

**JVN** [00:32:42] Oh, I love that.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:32:43] I know, it wasn't called that when I, when I was there, it was called Birmingham School of Acting. It's less fancy, but now I'm like Conservatoire. You might have heard of it. The Conservatoire. Yes.

**JVN** [00:32:50] So in that time when you were doing those schools, like what? Like what was that experience like? 'Cause you had already been doing, you know, like some work, did you feel like you were learning a lot? Were you getting any kind of pushed and stretched, did you like really learning your craft or the history? Like-?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:33:02] I did. I think it's like a time when I really felt like I found my tribe, like I met Camilla there who you've met.

**JVN** [00:33:06] You did? I love Camilla.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:33:08] I know. She's so amazing. So we were in the same group. And one of my best friends and we just I was like, oh, this is definitely what I want to do. I was like, always thought it was what I want to do as a career. But it's for sure. You know, it. But then I realized how difficult it was. And it's so competitive. And there's a book called "Spotlight Graduates" which has every graduate from the top drama schools each year. And I look through it and it like a couple of times, like every year, like once or twice. And I just to see the amount of people that are not working, it's like, oh, God. And it's not that they're not talented. It's not they-, it's just hard. It's so hard. It just any young people that want to get into I'm like, oh, just be careful. It's difficult. You don't want to see anybody get their heart broken.

**JVN** [00:33:46] But, you know, I think I mean, it is so difficult. But I do feel like it the more I see, the more I think that if, because there are so few roles and it is so limited, like the diversity and like the space is so limited. But I feel a lot of the diversity in the space is getting created its by creators themselves. It's not because like studios are like let's do more of this or that. It's like I think creators are getting more like people are creating their own.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:34:14] Things don't happen by accident. They really, really don't like I'm on a show right now that is like consciously diverse. And there's an amazing actor in it called Adjoa Ando. And she is playing this like I think like a real Maggie Smith and Downton type character, like fierce older woman, like beyond. So great. But we were talking about how in the press, like it was colorblind casting in the show. The show set in 1813 in Regency London.

**JVN** [00:34:39] Wait, what is it?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:34:40] It's called "Bridgerton", darling.

**JVN** [00:34:42] Oh.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:34:43] Netflix's original out 2020.

**JVN** [00:34:45] Oh, OK. So we veered into "Bridgerton". Ok.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:34:49] Yeah. But she's, so we were talking about, you know, we want to like represents it best as best we can. And speak not for the actors of color in our cast but like be fully supportive of them. And we we were like, is it just the best actors for the role? And she was like, it's not that, it has to be more than that because it has to. We need to make conscious change. And I think that's so right. We can't just be like, oh, I guess they will fit in. You've got to make space for people. Like all those, you know, nominations the other day. And people are so



disheartened. And I'm like, yeah it is really fucking disheartening for people that you think like I'm complaining about being like, if you want to say like a middle-class white woman going, "It's really hard for me to find roles". Like how much harder is it for like young women of color to find roles? Like a billion times harder than it is for me? Do you know what I mean? So we've got to like, you know, step up on the ladder and then clear a shit ton of space for everybody to get up as well.

**JVN** [00:35:34] Yeah. And I also just like the way that studios and it's like it's all about funding and like where the money comes from and I think the people are just so not trusting any, anyone outside of these like five, you know, boys club directors.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:35:49] Massively.

**JVN** [00:35:50] And yes, they know how to tell a story, nothing taking away from their stories.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:35:54] Absolutely.

**JVN** [00:35:54] But there's no, there's no incentive or reward for anyone to take a chance. And I think-

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:36:00] No.

**JVN** [00:36:00] Someone had to take a chance on all those people. You know? At some point, or maybe, well, who knows? But I mean, we need more and then no female directors this year I think is staggering. Because there are so many incredible films that are directed by women.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:36:11] It's a joke. It's such a joke. And it's just like I can see how if I know these young people would look and go, well, these people are at the top of their game and they didn't even-, award nominations are not everything, of course. But it is just like a reflection. So yeah, is really disheartening, but there is totally space.

**JVN** [00:36:24] So, but wait, back to you. You, so you finish your school and then what? So then you're like, you're in London?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:36:32] I moved on to London down from Birmingham and I had the worst time of my life. It sucked so hard.

**JVN** [00:36:36] Because you're just like, because you're like a little baby here, like new to London.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:36:40] Yeah. I found it really difficult and I was so lonely. And that's one thing that I like really made a conscious effort to like. After that period of time, I was like, I've got to, like, make friends. I'm going to make sure I'm going to make an effort because I think we sometimes, sometimes like we neglect, bleh bleh bleh. We neglect friendships. You know? Where like people like get all in our relationship. But I'm like, I'm going to be a good ass friend and I'm gonna make friends. I'm gonna nurture these things because I was so lonely when I moved. And that was one of the killer things to me. I was like, I don't like it here because I don't know anyone. I used to let that like city, like the whole, like rat race thing really get to me like, you know, so like I'm little. So like I was on the tube be really putting their elbows on my head.

**JVN** [00:37:15] Yeah.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:37:15] And I was going into work being like really sad and like like, yeah it just sucked. That first year totally suck. I hated it.

**JVN** [00:37:23] No, no, no. So it was difficult for you, so did that change? I mean did you make that sort of-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:37:29] Not immediately. No. It took honestly about four years.

**JVN** [00:37:33] Four?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:37:33] Yeah. I like left London because I was like, this is not happening. I had no reason.

**JVN** [00:37:38] I think it takes two, I think it always takes at leas-, oh, jeez. It always takes at least two years, I think. Anytime you move, at least. Of like really trying and trying.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:37:45] You've got a settle. It takes time. You need people. It's the people around you. Like no matter if you live and like, you know, the most gorgeous palace in the world, if you have good people, you might as well live in a toilet.

**JVN** [00:37:54] Yeah.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:37:54] It doesn't make any difference.

**JVN** [00:37:55] Yeah.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:37:55] No, I like had move back home. I'd like totally given up. I was like, this is not going to happen. And then I saw. Have you heard of the Old Vic Theater?

**JVN** [00:38:02] No.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:38:04] Really beautiful theater. One of the oldest in London. They had an open audition. It never happens. I was back in Galway. I was working in optician's. Optometrist is what you call it in the states.

**JVN** [00:38:12] Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:38:13] So if you ever have wonky glasses, just give them to me. And I will, click click, just fix them for you. So I was working there two days a week and I saw this open audition and I was like I'm going to go. But I was like, I have to buy the flight, and I was like I don't have any money, what am I doing, this is an open call. Why is-, this is really stupid. I went and I auditioned. They saw like fifteen hundred actors. They picked seven people. I got one of the seven spots. But this was like the three or four years out of drama school I want to say. And then that turned out to be this beautiful, beautiful play called "Jess and Joe Forever". It was about a young girl and a trans boy. That's a massive spoiler for anyone that reads the play. I'm sorry, but it's so beautiful you should read it anyway. But it was their love story about them growing up, and it was

just the most beautiful, magical thing. Written by a girl called Zoe Cooper, who I adore. It was written from a lot of her own experiences. And then that played then got taken on to another theater in London, and then this beautiful Asian called M. Higgenbottom came and saw me, she sat in the next room. But she came and saw me and signed me and that like changed everything. My first audition with her was "Derry Girls".

**JVN** [00:39:09] Oh, my gosh, what a great example of you only need one "yes".

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:39:13] Yeah. You need someone like to back you. And like, I feel so lucky with her. And I just so-, like, she has my back and I'm like, yeah.

**JVN** [00:39:20] But it's like you getting that audition, like good following your gut. Getting that. Getting one of those seven spots. Like, that was the "yes" that-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:39:26] I saw a tweet. I was like, saw a tweet. And I was like, I'm flying. And those spots fill up like that. They fill up so fast because there's way too many actors and not enough roles. And it was just total. Like I always think it's sort of sliding doors moment.

**JVN** [00:39:37] Yeah.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:39:38] I don't know what I'd be doing if I didn't see that Tweet.

**JVN** [00:39:39] Getting a team that believes in you especially is so important.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:39:44] Yes.

**JVN** [00:39:44] You have to have someone who believes in you. So then you book "Derry Girls". That was your first thing.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:39:50] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:39:50] If you haven't seen "Derry Girls", it is so incredible. It's so heartwarming. It's so funny. I think the comedy and the timing is better than the heartwarming. It really is so funny and-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:40:00] It's so funny. The script is like perfect. It doesn't have like a spare moment in it honestly.

**JVN** [00:40:05] So gives someone a recap without any spoilers.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:40:08] OK. So it's set in 1994 in this Catholic Girls School in Derry, which is in Northern Ireland. So people call it either Derry if they're Catholic or Londonderry if they're Protestant. That's the really massive oversimplification of the whole thing. But it's about these four girls and an English boy and they're navigating school and all of these things in the mid 90s. So it's got a lot of like like an amazing like 90 soundtrack. And like the looks and I look completely hideous in it. And they, I always go into my trailer. I'm like, I'm going to dress like a giant baby again. But Kathy Prior, who is our costume designer, I'm like, I'll wear anything for her. And she knows that. So there's always like these massive-, like they give me these teddybear earmuffs. I was like, oh, my God, I already look like a giant babies so like this is not helpful. But and it's produced

by women, written by a woman. It was commissioned by a lady called Fiona McDermott at Channel 4. It's, and it was just like I've got the script and I was like, I've never seen young women written like this. Like it reminded me of "Brides Maids". I was like, these women are allowed to be like funny and gross and like full personalities and they're obsessed with one another and it's not about, it's not like a high school thing about just finding a boy or da da da. It just felt so original and amazing. And I wanted it so bad from when I first read it. But I had it like, did you get that "Queer Eye" where you're like, just something about you're like, oh, this. I'm getting this.

**JVN** [00:41:21] I was no, I don't know, I wanted it so bad, but I, I was so scared I wasn't going to get it. I couldn't really like even fathom, like really getting it. But I guess I did have a little piece to me that was like I'm meant for this. Like, I felt that-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:41:35] I felt like that too. I think there's something in that when you're like, it just is right. I don't know what it is. I don't know why. But I was like, this is gonna be this thing. I don't know.

**JVN** [00:41:43] So you finish season 2.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:41:45] Finish season 2. Yes.

**JVN** [00:41:48] And is season-?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:41:49] Season 3 is coming. Yes.

**JVN** [00:41:51] Is it in the can? Meaning like is it?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:41:52] We have not made it yet. We are making it.

**JVN** [00:41:54] Are making it.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:41:55] They're being super, they're like, you're not allowed to say when we're filming. I'll like, OK.

**JVN** [00:41:59] Got it.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:41:59] But we will be.

**JVN** [00:42:00] But we have not started?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:42:01] We have not started yet because I'm-.

**JVN** [00:42:03] Literally?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:42:05] I was still filming "Bridgerton".

**JVN** [00:42:06] You are so fucking busy, girl. It's not your fault. She's what? Booked. She's why? Busy. Yes, she is. You can't help it. What does it feel like? You're in London like like you know, not that many years ago.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:42:21] I know.

**JVN** [00:42:21] Like very lonely. Would you move back? And now you're on like, you're doing two massive projects.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:42:26] It's insane. Like I get like I always like, try and remember. I think one of the most important things in life is gratitude above anything else, because I think you've got to appreciate the good when it comes. There's a lot of hard things in life. And if you don't like, sit down, go. You're really fucking lucky that you're doing this. And I think I have a little moment every day where I go, "Oh, my God, I'm really doing this". I'm so grateful for it. I just I always remind myself, I know how I know how lucky I am. It's insane.

**JVN** [00:42:50] So as, has doing the show, dear girls, it change your perspective on because I mean, the character you're playing is older than you were in 94.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:43:02] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:43:02] 'Cause like in 94, you were like-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:43:04] I was 7. We're the same age. So I was 7. Yeah.

**JVN** [00:43:05] So the character that you're playing is like in high-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:43:07] She started at 6-, she was 16. So she's like my sister, my actual sister. You've met Cloda. She's her age.

**JVN** [00:43:13] So did you like talk to her at all about what those experiences were like?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:43:16] Yeah. And I remember her and her friends at that time and they totally dressed like that. We're into all that music. So I remember at the time, but it's really fun to step back into it. And the whole and the way they do it, it's so true to the era, even if it is horribly unflattering. Sometimes the clothes. But it's super cool. I love it.

**JVN** [00:43:30] So not to bring up the Troubles for the last like four seconds, 'cause like we talk so much British history. So basically-. Is it correct? I think your sister just taught me this. So.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:43:39] Yes.

**JVN** [00:43:40] Basically in like the 30s or like the sixth, 19-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:43:43] So it was 60s that the trouble sort of started in Northern Ireland. So Northern Ireland, there's 32 counties in the island of Ireland. There's six in Northern Ireland, it's Derry, Antrim, Down, Fermanagh, Armagh, Tyrone. Hope I said all those right.

**JVN** [00:43:55] And those were-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:43:56] They are basically ruled by the United Kingdom.

**JVN** [00:43:59] So when so when those people got together in Dublin, they became martyrs. And then. And then the, Ireland kicked Britain out and stuff.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:06] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:44:06] Britain like cleared out of Ireland, except for those like six.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:08] Those six counties, because a lot of, oh god, I'm going to mess this up.

**JVN** [00:44:11] But was there still see people in the north who like wanted to-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:15] Yes.

**JVN** [00:44:15] They wanted to leave but some wanted too? Like there is both of them.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:18] Yes. I mean, you don't see like a 50/50 split, but there's like the nationalists and then the Republicans. So unionists who want to remain part of Great Britain and then the Republicans who want to be part of the republic. So it's an ongoing thing-.

**JVN** [00:44:29] But Ireland was much more on the-?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:32] The rest of Ireland.

**JVN** [00:44:33] Was much more Republican.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:35] Yes it is.

**JVN** [00:44:35] Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:36] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So they weren't. Yeah.

**JVN** [00:44:37] Yeah. Like overwhelmingly so obviously.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:39] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:44:39] So then in but in Northern Ireland like it wasn't. So then the 60s the Troubles started in.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:43] Yeah. And it's really, I mean it's-.

**JVN** [00:44:45] Was because some people in the Troubles wanted to join Ireland or was it their Troubles starting to stay in-.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:44:49] It was a lot to do with the British army being there and sort of patrolling the streets and sort of. It's really, really complicated history and it's very-. I'll bring you. Actually I'm going to bring you up on we're filming again, so you can see. But there's murals

everywhere, all over the streets of like about what you know, what side people are on, like where they support the British and you'll see the poppies everywhere and then you'll see the tricolor Irish flag on some places. And, you know, it's all, I think it's changing, but it's certainly it hit a head. And there was you know, I don't know how many civilian murders, thousands of civilian murders. And then Bloody Sunday, which happened in Derry. And-

**JVN** [00:45:23] What was Bloody Sunday?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:45:24] Bloody Sunday was basically a civil rights march that was happening in Derry and the British army opened fire and murdered, I don't know the number of civilians, I would hate to say, and get it wrong, but it was like a real atrocity that happened there. And you'll see a lot of murals there that are, you know, dedicated to people who died as part of the Troubles. And "Derry Girls" is set at sort of the tail end of them. So starts in '94 when, you know, things were getting better. And Bill Clinton was a huge part of the peace process there. And, you know, decommissioning the arms and all that stuff, because a lot of the arms came in from the states. I think why they got kind of so involved in it. But yeah, there was a scene in the last episode of Series Two where Bill Clinton came to Derry and delivered this speech. About, you know, about the Troubles and about people finding peace in all this stuff and it's really prescient now. It's crazy. I mean, unfortunately so with the way things are going.

**JVN** [00:46:12] Do you think that's. Well, I mean, obviously that was like part of what with the Brexit dealing with like such a big deal because like to figure out like with that border was going to be was like it was just because all of that all that wounding and all of that bloodshed is still really fresh.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:46:24] It's still really fresh. And there's been some. I mean, not a huge resurgence. And you would hope it would stop, but there's been some you know, there was an awful murder of this young journalist, called Lyra McKee.

**JVN** [00:46:33] Yes.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:46:35] You know, all of that happening. And it's just the people in Derry when you go there, it's a really joyous place. It's one of the most welcoming places. The people are so sweet. They deserve a lot better than to be used as a pawn in Westminster's Brexit. And it's really sickening, 'cause you think you've never gone there. You've never met those people. You don't know how it's gonna affect their day-to-day life. You can't stick a border up there. You know, it's just it's. Yeah, it makes me really cross. Yeah.

**JVN** [00:46:59] So, I mean, what do you see? What do you see as like as. I just think you give a very interesting position. Like having like you're playing in this show. You're from Ireland, living in Britain. What do you see as, like what's your hope?

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:47:13] I don't know. I mean, it's weird because I'm not from Northern Ireland. I'm from the republic. So I never grew up with the Troubles, didn't know like I learned about in school or whatever. But it's not first hand experience, I would never claim it to be, but then becoming so connected to Derry and I always will be now. And just knowing all my friends are from there, like Saoirse and Jamie-Lee from the show who are from there and grew up there and their families are there. I just want a lot better. And then, you know, as an Irish person living in

London and when I first moved, moved over here, like I worked in, you know, a soap shop, I worked in a restaurant, I worked in. And so I worked with all you immigrants. I didn't like work with a lot of British people. I'm like and they want to talk about our points, great immigration system and stuff like that. I wouldn't maybe have been let into the country. And I wanted to, like, follow my dreams here. But that's that takes time. That doesn't happen overnight. I didn't you know, so I don't know. I just, oh god, I mean, I don't, I'm not, I don't like Brexit. And I think it's a disaster. I think it's so divisive. I think this country is split right down the middle. Like we, you know, those two referendums that we had, in Ireland, whatever, you know, society fell on, at least you see were informed. And the government, I think it's where the people really were informed, whereas Brexit, they did not have a plan. It was insane. It was such, you know, it. I just think for David Cameron, he just should be so ashamed of splitting this country the way he has. It's because I moved here first 2008, and I feel it's becoming more and more and more divided and more. You know, we're on this side and this side. Like it just sucks so I hope we will be able to come together and that people who, you know, like I did come to this country for opportunities, get to have those opportunities and yeah. I don't know.

**JVN** [00:48:42] Yeah. But I mean for, do.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:48:46] Oh.

**JVN** [00:48:48] Nicola, I love you so much. You're the most amazing.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:48:53] I love you. You are such a-

**JVN** [00:48:54] Thank you for telling us everything.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:48:54] Darling person. And I want everyone to know, everyone who listens to this, you're just as wonderful in real life, if not more. And you're just gorgeous. And darling, and I love you.

**JVN** [00:49:01] No, you're the most royal and gorgeous and I can't wait to see everything you do. I can't wait to see "Bridgerton". I can't wait to see series three of "Derry Girls". You're just so amazing. Thank you so much for everything.

**NICOLA COUGHLAN** [00:49:08] Love you.

**JVN** [00:49:09] Oh we have to have you back, we need to talk about so much. Ok, love you so much. Bye. You've been listening to "Getting Curious" with me, Jonathan Van Ness. My guest this week was Nicola Coughlan. You'll find links to her work in episode description of whatever you're listening to the show on. Our theme music is "Freak" by Quin. Thank you so much for her for letting us use it. If you enjoyed our show introduce a friend and show them how to subscribe, honey. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter at CuriousWithJVN Our socials are run and curated by Emily Bossak. "Getting Curious" is produced by me, Julie Carrillo, Emily Bossak, Rae Ellis, Chelsea Jacobson and Colin Anderson. Catch you next time on "Getting Curious". Love you all, mean it. Bye.