

Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Edward Enninful, OBE

JVN [00:00:00] Welcome to Getting Curious. I'm Jonathan Van Ness and every week I sit down for a gorgeous conversation with a brilliant expert to learn all about [SINGS] something that makes me curious. [STOPS SINGING] I don't know why I do that but I do it sometimes! I think I just don't want you guys to get bored, it's, like, I just want to keep the intros fresh for y'all. I love ya, thanks for being here, and let's get on with today's episode. We are going to be joined by Edward Enninful, OBE, where I ask him: how are you styling a more inclusive fashion world? Welcome to Getting Curious. This is Jonathan Van Ness. If you are someone who enjoys fashion and magazines, sit down, strap in, and don't shit your pants if you're driving to work. Because I'd hate for you to show up to work with, like, poo in your pants. I can't believe I just said that for our guest. Kill me. When we had Munroe Bergdorf on the show, obviously one of our best episodes ever. She spoke so highly of today's guest and we are so excited that we get to have him on the show. At only 18 years old, he became the world's youngest fashion director of a magazine. Over the last three decades, he's brought gorgeous styling and thoughtful editorial insights to your favorite magazines and led the change for a more diverse, welcoming fashion world. Edward Enninful, OBE is editor in chief of British Vogue. I just got chills on my queer triceps. And the European Editorial Director of Vogue. More chills, now there are my quads. His new memoir, *A Visible Man*, is out now. Ah! And how are you, Edward, are you just, like, living your best life? I have to stop talking. How are you?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:01:26] I'm good. I've been in New York for a few days and I'm having the best time. I used to live here for 14 years and then I went back to do British Vogue. But now I'm back! To do a week here, and it's gorgeous.

JVN [00:01:40] Most people know who you are, but just for like our friends who are maybe, like, in, in Indiana, not that in Indiana, people, like, aren't fashionable. And also if you're American and you didn't know what OBE is and, like, respectfully, I had to Google it myself. But like, that means the queen herself was literally, like, I'm paraphrasing here, but, like, you're a bad bitch. You represent the queen, honey. Like, because basically it's, like, it's, like, Order of the British...

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:02:3] Empire.

JVN [00:02:04] Empire, honey! So that's, like, a major thing?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:02:07] It's a good title that goes after your name. I mean, you've done something for your country that helped other people or, you know, something for attention to the country. So I was very proud of that. So the OBE stands for that. There's several layers of that. And then what I do really is I am Editor for British Vogue, also European Director for Vogue. So what I really do is I oversee the magazine, the content, the website, the entertainment, the podcast, like, the whole Vogue universe for British Vogue.

JVN [00:02:37] Jesus Christ, that's a lot!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:02:43] [LAUGHTER] And then these incredible young editors we have in France, Italy, Spain and Germany. I oversee them. They report in and I kind of guide them a bit. But it's, it's, it's great. You know, I have a lot of energy, so, all good.

JVN [00:02:55] Basically your day makes my itinerary schedule look like a, like a married rich mom of two going to Whole Foods like, just like lackadaisically just, like—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:03:06] I'm sure your schedule's insane.

JVN [00:03:08] But it's like 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.. Like, you have something to do, like, all the time.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:03:12] Actually, those are the exact hours.

JVN [00:03:14] Really?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:03:15] Yeah.

JVN [00:03:16] And you work till ten? Yeah.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:03:19] Yeah, yeah. And I sleep at 10 p.m, hopefully.

JVN [00:03:21] And you look 11 years old. What? It's like, really good. It, you know, you, you see, like all the good that you're putting into the fashion industry, like, like the universe is like giving it back to your skin, which is just great. I, I congratulate you on that. Like, that is so good for you. And our guiding question is, like, how are you styling a more inclusive fashion world? Also, it could be, like, how did you turn out to be such a bad fucking major bitch, honey? How did you get here? What happened? We're so obsessed.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:03:45] So how did I start? Well, I started, I was born in Ghana, West Africa. One of six siblings. Grew up with my mum, my mum making clothes, fabulous designs, you know, peplum, waist, you know, African women, head scarves to the sky, sleeves. And I just grew up listening and taking in all the gossip, taking in all the, you know, the fierceness of women, really. And then we had to leave the country because there was a military coup and my dad was in the military. So we moved to England, penniless, broke, sharing rooms.

JVN [00:04:21] What year was that?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:04:22] This was 1985.

JVN [00:04:24] 1985?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:04:26] Yes. It sounds like—, it's not that far away.

JVN [00:04:30] I mean, but you're just, like, a little baby.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:04:33] Little baby! Like, 13! Little baby!

JVN [00:04:37] So, like, little baby, teenage Edward. And, like, your parents are just, like, "We've gotta go. There is, like, a full on thing, like..." So that's probably a little traumatizing for, like, a young person, like, that's a lot.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:04:48] We had grown up sort of very happy, very typical. But, you know, when you're so young, you don't really know what's going on. It wasn't until we heard that one of my dad's cousins had literally been shot at his breakfast table that we just had to get out. And my dad went ahead and sort of got things ready. And we went and we went from sort of a kind of a middle class lifestyle to just, poor old common.

JVN [00:05:14] And you go to London.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:05:16] Yes, London, cold! Freezing, London! I mean, the first time I saw vapor coming out of my brother's mouth, I thought, "He'd just eaten eggs. And that's why!" I said, "The eggs were very strong this morning. Cause I can see a vapor."

JVN [00:05:34] Because you had been brought up in this, like, rich, beautiful culture, like, it's giving texture, it's giving fabrics, it's giving, like, this beautiful culture. And then it's warm.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:05:43] Oh, warm every day.

JVN [00:05:44] Like, warm every day. Is there beaches?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:05:46] Oh, yeah! We lived opposite the beach. You know, it was so different. And then next minute we're wearing coats. We're wearing jackets.

JVN [00:05:54] What a culture shock, like, you get there. It's, like, the, like, mid-eighties, you're like a teenager, you're, like, adjusting to school.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:06:01] Thirteen is, like, the worst. The hormones are raging.

JVN [00:06:03] Yeah. It's, like, such a weird age. But it's, like, also you kind of end up in this other epicenter of fashion. There's also, like, very intersectional, multinational culture in London. So what happens from 13 to 18? Because you go on to become, like, the youngest director of a fashion, like, that's a fast five years.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:06:20] So I remember, you know, going to school in London and learning, you know, learning to sort of speak the Queen's English or however you want to call it, being called all kinds of names. And then I used to have this big afro and, like, you know, what you call them, milk bottle glasses, which I still kind of have now, very proud of them. But I remember I said to my mum, "You know, I don't want to wear glasses anymore." I'd always had bad eyesight. And you remember when they started making contact lenses, there were those hard ones.

JVN [00:06:50] Yes.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:06:51] And you popped them in your eye and you're like, "Oh!" Anyways, I got those. And I was on a train to college, I was 16, and there was a guy staring at me, and I was really freaked out. I didn't know why he was staring at me, you know, I so sheltered, by the way. So I thought, "Am I in trouble? What have I done?" And then it happens to be that he was a fabulous stylist. Simon Foxtan for i-D magazine, which at the time was the bomb, and I was staring him in the face. And he gave me his card to be a model. And even I didn't even know what modeling was. So I told my mom and she was, like, "No, no, darling, this, no, it's a funny industry." And I didn't even know what she meant and I wore her down. So before you knew it, I was kind of modeling for Nick Night and Simon and, you know, a modeling agency. And then I got into fashion, really. And then I was introduced to i-D magazine in those two years when I was going to college, modeling, assisting.

JVN [00:07:51] Wait, so you're, like, modeling at the same time as, like, Gia. So you're just, like, modeling in, like, the same era as, like, the fucking era of the fucking supermodels!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:08:00] Kate, Naomi. All of them. Yeah. Same time period. But the girls were doing much better than the boys. I mean, I did good editorial, but I didn't make any money.

JVN [00:08:09] And you were just giving, like, [MODEL POSE SOUND EFFECTS] Do you have any of those, like, pictures? Just, like, framed in your house?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:08:14] No! [LAUGHING] They're in the book, though. You have to buy my book to see those pictures.

JVN [00:08:19] Okay, we have to—, I need, like, one image for, like, when this comes out. I'm just, like, we've gotta, like, for the clickeths. I'm dying. I got to see this because I just I the these angles are giving me first thing in the morning on fucking whatever today is. Like, I can only imagine what you're giving, like, the photogs in 1990, honey, get out! Because A Visible Man is your first book, right?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:08:37] Yes.

JVN [00:08:38] And so obviously, like, you've put out a magazine monthly for years. What was it like writing *A Visible Man*? And then what was the difference between, like, releasing *A Visible Man* and then releasing a piece of editorial work as far as, like, a magazine is concerned?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:08:54] Yeah. I mean, in a magazine, you know, you have a structure that's in place. You have a team that's in place. Daily meetings, your planning meetings, as we call them. You figure out your issues in advance. So you kind of know your deadlines and rhythms. When it comes to writing the book, oh my God, that's a whole different animal. So, like, sometimes it's easy to put, you know, words down on paper. Sometimes, you know, it's so emotional that you need a moment. Sometimes nothing comes, sometimes you record. So, I mean, so that was a whole different headspace. If anybody says to you, "Putting out a magazine is the same as putting out a book." No, I had no idea.

JVN [00:09:38] How hard it was.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:09:39] I had no idea how hard it was. I remember a friend of mine saying, "If you ever write a book, make sure you have the time." And, you know, we were in lockdown when I started, so I had a bit of time on my hands, but I wouldn't have been able to if, if lockdown hadn't happened.

JVN [00:09:52] I was just thinking about, like, how long did it take? Like, when did you start? So you started in, like, early-ish 2020.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:09:58] It was like two-and-a-half years. Yeah.

JVN [00:09:59] Yeah. That's a long time. So have you found any joys in being able to have a project that you did get to spend more time with? I would assume with, like, magazines, it's like, obviously it's *Vogue*, so it is perfection. But it's, like, because it's like a deadline and you're always doing one, like, every month. It's like I would assume—and correct me if I'm wrong—that you need to, like, be married to the perfection, but also be willing to, like, shift and change because, like, it needs to be on time. But with a memoir you really can, like, sit with it a little longer. You have more time to, like, really perfect your wording.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:10:34] Perfect it.

JVN [00:10:35] Was that fun for you or did you find that, like, laborious? Were you, like, "I don't want to look at this, these groupings of words ever again because I've been doing it for so long?"

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:10:42] There were fun moments, there were lots of fun moments. But I also knew that I wasn't going to give you, like, "Here's the new kitten heel, here's a new bow for the head." You know, it was more than that. I think a lot of people thought that was

the kind of book that was coming. But I thought, "If I'm going to write a book, it's going to be very honest. It was going to be sort of, you know, very in-depth." So there were hard moments where you're like, "I don't want, even want to do this anymore." And of course, you signed a contract. So, you've gotta do it.

JVN [00:11:06] Mhmm, yes!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:11:08] [LAUGHTER]

JVN [00:11:08] When I did my book *Over The Top*, I'm a survivor of sexual abuse, a lot of my recovery has been about, like, kind of learning to protect my inner child and, like, learning to, like, protect myself and, like, set boundaries for myself in ways that, like, I wasn't ever able to before. So when I wrote that book, a lot of the publishers and team was, like, "Oh, we really want to, like, use pictures, like, to kind of illustrate you as, like, when you were a little kid," and I felt really protective and I was, like—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:11:32] Oh, yeah, I felt the same.

JVN [00:11:33] And I was, like, "I'm just not willing," like, so I didn't. So *Over The Top* has, like, zero pictures. Did you have that experience or, like, any trepidation, about, like, you are this fashion editor, but then showing this more vulnerable, raw side of yourself and, like, what your actual story was. Were you scared? Was your team scared? Like, how did you just do it?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:11:51] I didn't want to do it for so many years. I didn't want to do it. I was, like, "Nobody wanted to hear my story." You know, the fashion industry is very beautiful, very surface.

JVN [00:11:59] But that was your imposter syndrome talking, like, because actually people did want to hear your story.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:12:03] I talk about imposter syndrome in the book. So for me, by the time I came to writing the book, I was there. I'm, like, "Okay," when you get to know me, I'm that kind of person. Sometimes it takes me a while to get there but then I'm, like, "It's okay, done, out to the world. That's it." It took me years to get to the point of writing a book, but once I committed, all good. All good.

JVN [00:12:24] Do you think you'd ever do it again? Do you think you have, like, other stories that you want to tell?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:12:27] [LAUGHTER] They're already asking me, everyone's already asking me if there's a second book! I'm like—

JVN [00:12:33] Like, well, because that's good.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:12:35] Let's get this one out there first.

JVN [00:12:36] But that's how, you know, you're talented, honey, that's how you know that you have, like, a gift because like when they get the first one, they like it's giving Empire. It's coming, like, with, like, that, like, season one Empire when you're like, "I must have more!" like, this. That means that, you know, that people were, like, obsessed. I love that.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:12:49] Yeah, but you know what I loved? What I really loved? What we're talking about the vulnerability sort of sharing with people about my imposter syndrome, about my health, my health issues, you know, about growing up sort of, you know, Black and poor, all those things that people didn't know. For me, people are now saying, "Thank you. We thank you for seeing us." So for me, that's—, it's doing it's work. It's doing it's work. And your book did it's work because I read about all those things you said and I was, like, "What an incredible human being." That's what I thought.

JVN [00:13:22] Thank you.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:13:23] What an incredible human being. And people use the word brave a lot, but for me, it's, like, "It's just life, isn't it?"

JVN [00:13:29] Yeah.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:13:29] It's your life.

JVN [00:13:30] As I've gotten to know Tan and gotten to know my husband, it's been interesting because I do feel like it's this, like, idea, especially in, like, the U.S that, like, racism didn't like exist in the ways that it does here, over there that like the United Kingdom is this, like, post-racial world. Like, "Oh, Europeans, like they don't do that there." Like, it's like it's like it's like chicer or something.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:13:50] They all live in castles.

JVN [00:13:52] What was that like for you navigating this fashion industry because I would think that there is a lot of people in the industry that you have heard "No," a lot like that on your way to becoming the editor of British Vogue. Like, "You can't do it, you won't be able to do it." Like what was overcoming that systemic oppression like?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:14:11] I mean, I always say that my favorite question was always, "Why?" When people say, you know, "You can't do it." "Why?" "We always do it this way." "Why?" So it's, like, "Why can't we change things?" I mean, growing up, I was sort of the only one. I mean, I had André Leon Talley it to look up to, but for me, he lived in America. It was so far away and I had to really navigate fashion in the nineties on my own and, and, and make

mistakes and learn from them and work on it. And with i-D magazine I really made sure at the time that I knew everything about a magazine, everything, from styling covers to writing features, the art department, like, I learned on the job. So that, you know, when people told me “No,” I, I would always be able to push back. But what it did was, you know, I worked ten times as hard as everybody. You know, that's the kind of background you come from when you're an immigrant. And there were a lot of “Nos” and a lot of pushbacks. But when you're young and you have the energy, you always pick yourself up and you push on. And sometimes some incidents were tough to deal with, an 18-year-old being told, you know, you know, “There's no room for Black people here. There's no room for Black people there.” You know, unconscious biases that I had to deal with. And sometimes, you know, not even unconscious, just straight up. “You're not right for this job.” And, you know, I just powered through, I just powered through. But I also had some great friends, you know, Naomi Campbell, who was doing the same thing in her industry. My friend Pat McGrath, the makeup artist, was doing the same thing in her industry.

JVN [00:15:41] Ah! Ah! Ah! “The makeup artist,” as if I, I went to literally, like, lay, like, I would take my queer body and I would, like, hammer it into the asphalt if there were a puddle for her to, like, walk over my back, you know, I'm saying? Like, the iconery of literally Pat fucking McGrath, so major! Her red lip, like, it's the best of all time. It's, like, so— [CROSSTALK] Get out of my face, Pat McGrath, she's so fucking major. So that is, like, “There's no room for Black people here.”

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:16:091] Yeah, but we found a community. But we found a little community.

JVN [00:16:14] 100%. But I mean, for someone to say that to someone with a straight face, like, it's like you said, like that's not even unconscious. Like, that's just, like, conscious, deliberate, like, racial bias.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:16:22] But you know, I also, I was also lucky the most because I had the magazine. So I'm like, “I'm just going to show the world as I saw it.” You know, all these colors, beauty, shades, whatever you want to call it. And so I was very lucky to have a platform from a very young age and then went on to, of course, Italian Vogue—

JVN [00:16:39] Ah, Italian Vogue! Get out!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:16:40] And Vogue US and W.

JVN [00:16:42] I've been thinking about this a lot lately. Like when I was growing up in America in the age of, like, Defense of Marriage Act, like, Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Like, I was born in '87, I, you know, was raised in rural America, like, through, like, the Clinton administration and then, like, the Bush administration. And I remember back then, just, like, how much homophobia there was, I remember thinking, like, “This is never going to get

better. I'll never be able to be married. Like my adult life is never going to be what I want it to be." On one hand I thought, "It's never going to get better." But then there's this other part where you're like, "Oh, maybe it will!"

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:17:11] You have to have hope.

JVN [00:17:12] And then we do experience progress. And then just to set the stage for listeners, that Liz Truss lady, like, just took over for Boris. It's like a more conservative government than ever. I see people in America, like, Marjorie Taylor Greene, Lauren Boebert, these, like, really ultra-right wing conservatives. And one thing that scares me about those type of people is, like, they're not older. They're not, like, 60 or 70. Like, they're my age. Like, they're in our age boxes. So there's just, like, that duality of, like, there can be progress and regression at the same time. But how do you deal with those setbacks? How do you deal with, like, keeping a positive outlook? Is that just by, like, focusing on what you're passionate about? Like, how do you keep putting one foot in front of the other?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:17:55] I mean, basically, I've dealt with this my whole life: Black, gay, working class. So for me, this is just another chapter in the world. All I know is that you're not going to stop me and you won't stop progress. You won't stop progress. Yes, there will always be these regressions. They'll come and go. And they have they've come and go through history, but we will keep moving forward. And that, for me is one thing I strongly believe. There's an "attack on Wokeism right now." I'm, like, "I don't even know what that word means because my whole life has been about, let's just move forward." I didn't have the luxury of staying and looking back at what a wonderful world we lived in. I was always aware that somebody was going to attack our, you know, attack who I was essentially. So, you know, you're always on alert, but you have to look forward. You can't, you can't let people stop you. You can't let people bring you down. You have to have your inner belief and you have to keep moving forward and being vocal, essentially.

JVN [00:18:56] Okay, I'm obsessed. I love. But in *A Visible Man*. It's, it is a memoir. It's it's your story. And it's also a history of fashion, specifically fashion in London and New York, from like

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EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:19:12] It's very fashion.

JVN [00:19:13] Which we love. You got to give us fashion. What was it like to, like, periodize your life through different style eras in writing about it?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:19:22] It was so funny because yeah, I remember the sort of late eighties when things were very different, fashions were very different, London was very different, you know, it wasn't so international, fashion, when I started, it was a New York scene and London scene and there was a scene in Paris. And what I realized was, "My God, how many wonderful people I have grown up with!" So many incredible people. Neneh Cherry, you

know, Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell, incredible people. You know, recently people like Rihanna. Beyoncé. And the fact that I've been able to be a part of pop culture or witness pop culture so close is incredible. I never thought I would. I never thought I'd see any of this, you know, when I—, when we landed in London. And then next minute it's a whirlwind. Like a Cinderella story.

JVN [00:20:12] Only because it's come into my brain three times and I'm going off script again and I hate myself for doing it but I, I can't help it.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:20:17] Do what you've gotta do.

JVN [00:20:18] The HBO made-for-TV movie Gia, starring Angelina Jolie about, like, you know, Gia. So like. Did you know her?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:20:17] I love Gia. She was before.

JVN [00:20:28] Before.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:20:28] Yeah. She was, like, the same generation as Iman. And Janice Dickinson.

JVN [00:20:33] Ah! Janice Dickinson!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:20:33] Janice Dickinson was a major model.

JVN [00:20:35] Ohmigod, one time, one time, this is a literal true story. One time when I was an assistant in Beverly Hills and I was an assistant at Joseph Martin Salon. And I went to Starbucks to get coffee for my client and, well, actually, my boss's client, it wasn't mine I was an assistant. But anyway, I was standing there and then I feel this tap on my shoulder and I turn around. It's Janice Dickinson.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:20:51] Oh, wow!

JVN [00:20:52] And so we're, like, looking at each other. And I was just, like, "I love you on ANTM so much, I can't even stop it, like, I love you so much. Like your styer story is like I tell it to everyone like eight times a week. Like, I love you so much," and I would like this like to be like, I love you. And then she started, like, combing my arm hair, and she was like, "Look how hairy your arms are." And I was like, "Are you okay?" And then she was, like, "I'm great. I'm getting my extensions redone. I'm having a good day." It was the best 10 minutes of my 21 year old life I have ever—actually, I was, like, 22—but it was like the best day of my life. I love Janice Dickinson.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:21:26] She is so fun.

JVN [00:21:27] No, she's just iconic. I love her so much. She's major. So all of those people. So but in the Gia movie, you know that part when they're, like, when no one knew that she passed away. Was that true? Like, people just really didn't know that she passed away for, like, a whole year?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:21:41] I mean, I think that might be a bit of an exaggeration. But you know what used to happen then? People used to disappear. You know that, right?

JVN [00:21:47] No.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:21:48] Well, back then, when I was growing up, the club scene, when people sort of got sick, you know, whether it was HIV or—, they disappeared back to their family homes. And you were, like, "What happened to James? What happened to John?" And then what did you see? A TV show by Russell T Davies? "It's A Sin"?

JVN [00:22:11] Yes, yes. All of it! It was incredible.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:22:13] That was a real story, but people disappeared. And the families would be like. All right, "You're back now." And you wouldn't hear, wouldn't hear anything.

JVN [00:22:23] Oh, my God. That is, like, just such intense trauma. I'm driving back into my questions. I'm sorry I freaked out and, like, went on a Gia off course, but I just. I mean, on, and also, too, you're, like, I should have known this, but it's, like, you're, I mean, the you're just giving such 28. You're giving such 32 who just, like, has been working since you were, like, six that, like, I—, it's hard for me to get through my head that you could have ever worked in, like even close to the eras. You know what I'm saying? Because you just look like you're all of a 12 and a half years old, which I love that for you.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:22:48] Aw, you're so sweet.

JVN [00:22:50] I get really excited when like, good people, like, look like that. Like when, like, good people are hot, like, it's great. Like, it makes me happy that it, like, didn't befall on someone who's not cute or, like, not cute on the inside but they're cute on the outside, you know? So I just I love that for you. So I tend to count time and Olympic cycles. Like, I'll be like, "That was the Michelle Kwan era." Like, "That was, like, the Katarina Witt era." Do you do that with fashion? And so what was, like, your favorite moment?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:23:14] I mean, for me, you know, I always talk about the nineties because the nineties was when I came to. The nineties was when I was fashion director for i-D. It's when we looked at all that had gone on in the eighties, the big hair. And we were, like, "We don't want this, we want grunge, we want, we want, you know, something new, something that represents our age." So, you know, we did all these sort of, you know, CK

Obsession ads, Kate Moss, you know, lanky hair, tank tops, current day. So that was our— Pat McGrath, we all came from that time. We all came from London at the same time, but we wanted something that—we were, like, we were, like, twenty what? In the late teens, early twenties, all of us. So we wanted this whole grunge movement to reflect our reality. So then we went out into the world and it became something else. But that was a very exciting time. Y2K was good too, because then I was a bit older, turning out for Italian Vogue back to back with Steven Meisel, plastic surgery, Black issue.

JVN [00:24:07] Steven Meisel! Ah! Y2K bitch! That was, like, very, when I think Y2K, I think Entrapment. I think Catherine Zeta Jones, I think Red Lasers. I think Sean Connery. I think about them sexualizing her body when she was, like, swimming in the ocean and they were, like, "What size do you think she is?" And she was, like, "She's probably a six. But she'd look damn good in a four!" And it was, like, "Gross!" But at the time, you're like, "This is great." [CLAPS] I can't—that is, okay, I do have, like, another off script question. But you can just, like, blink twice if you want to answer it. Has there ever been a chapter in your whole career where, like, let's say you were going to have somebody on a cover and it was, like, already shot. But then they, like, get, like, there is, like, some fucking, like, Armie Hammer-level, like, they are fucking, like, eating shit or like there's like a video of them like just doing something really fucking intense and like, like a week before it goes like, and we don't need to know who, like, I don't wanna do that, but has that ever happened where you had to, like, yank someone off a cover because they, like, did something really fucking bad and you knew it was going to be, like, bad for the magazine?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:25:06] Yes. [JONATHAN GASPS] And it wasn't once either.

JVN [00:25:10] No!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:25:11] You know what? And it can happen any minute. It can happen next month. It can happen the month after. You just have to be prepared! That's the world of magazines.

JVN [00:25:19] Has it happened more than the count of times that you can count on two hands, like, have you had to like, pull a cover?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:25:24] No.

JVN [00:25:25] So it's, like, a rarity. It's, like, a rarity.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:25:28] Yeah.

JVN [00:25:29] And did your stomach and your heart dropped through your asshole. Was it, like, as bad as you thought it would be, or was it, like, or, like, did you land on your feet? Do you just do like a last minute photoshoot with someone else?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:25:41] When you work for a magazine, you have to learn to pivot. Remember, in lockdown, when we didn't have any staff, we didn't have any—

JVN [00:25:46] Yes!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:25:47] And we had to create issues. Judi Dench on the cover, the activism, the activism cover. The essential workers cover. So you must learn to pivot. So I always cover myself. I always think, "You never know." I'm really paranoid like that because, you know, I've always been, like, "Nothing is forever." So I'm always covering my back. So if one cover gets pulled, that just means another one will, will appear.

JVN [00:26:09] And not that I'm asking because, like, I want to be on a cover someday, but if I did, when you guys are, like, like, ideating on, like, what the covers are going to be? Is there, like, a one who you're, like, "That's going to be like, that's my first choice." But then there's like a backup in case they're busy and like, that's like a third backup and then maybe that one, if like the third one isn't available, like we can do a feature on them or something. Or is there just someone you have your heart set on?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:26:30] I'm really so paranoid about, about things falling through that I make sure I have contracts in place, I book my covers, I book my covers in advance. I don't wait for this month. I book it in advance, like, six months in advance. And, you know, sometimes things can change.

JVN [00:26:46] So you don't really do a backup?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:26:47] There's always a backup because when you give yourself that much time, you, you've shot in advance. So if things need to move around. You can do it. So I don't wait last minute to panic. I'm, like, "Okay, this one was meant for this month, but let's do a little flip." Let's, you know, anything's, anything's possible.

JVN [00:27:03] Okay, here's this other thing that happened to me this one time. And, like, tell me if anything like this has ever happened to you. Okay? This one time I was on a TV show, but I'm not going to say who or what or anything. But this one time I was on this TV show, I was doing hair on it. I wasn't on it. So this is, like, it was, like, way before *Queer Eye*. And so I was standing next to the manager of the host on the show, and then this other guy came up to us and basically said to me and the host's manager, "What has that host done to their face? They look this, they look that." And I was standing with the makeup artist and we both looked at each other and made the face that you just made. Like, I was, like, like, my hands just came up to my face. And then the makeup artist was, like, she just whispered to me. She was, like, "I'm 50 years old, and this is the most mortified I have ever been in my life." Like, she whispered that to me. And then we both just looked at the manager to be, like, "What's going to happen?" And then the manager literally just, like, looked over and was, like, "Security!"

And then, like, the security guard came over as a manager was, like, "This person needs to be removed." And he was the assistant director, he was the assistant director of the whole shoot and got fired, like, fired at 11:30 p.m.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:28:00] Bye! Bye! Bye! People need to have empathy. We need empathy. You never know what people are going through.

JVN [00:28:09] What is, like, leaving names out, but, like, what is like the cringiest, worst, because that to me is, like, my top one most embarrassing story of, like, yeah, that's my top one most embarrassing story. Like, I've never seen anything worse. It was, like, watching a car wreck where no one—tell us.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:28:23] When you read my book *A Visible Man*, that's an incident where I'm working with one of the biggest stars in the world. And I've been so excited. I've gone out of my way to get the clothes from Paris, couture. And I'm so excited. She walks into the studio. I'm like, "Can you come to the dressing room?" She gets to the entrance of the dressing room and says, "I hate everything." I'm, like, "Oh, do you want to try it on?" "I don't even want to come into the room. I hate everything." The whole studio's looking at me, I am mortified. And then I try to follow her into the dressing room. And she turns around and she says, "Stylist, get out and stay out." And the whole day wouldn't talk to me. So my assistant had to do the shoot. This was years ago when I was a stylist.

JVN [00:29:11] Oh, no, that's, that's intense. And so that's, like, the "don't ever meet your heroes" thing, because they might, like...

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:29:16] Yeah, yeah.

JVN [00:29:17] And did they ever apologize?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:29:19] Now they're very nice to me. This person is so nice to me, hasn't put together that I was that same kid. One day we'll have that conversation.

JVN [00:29:27] And in the book, do you name the person?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:29:30] No, because I think, I feel like stylists should also have a code. You know, you should have to keep discretion.

JVN [00:29:37] I only ever worked with stylists, like, as a hairdresser, you know, like, I never had one. But I've basically been with the same one since the beginning of *Queer Eye* because I love her so much I would, like, walk in front of a bus for her. Like, I love her so much, but we have such a good, like, we just have such a good thing. Like, stylists are just so—, the coolest, most amazing.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:29:56] They get beat up a lot on. The photographer's beat them.

JVN [00:30:00] Oh yeah, that's true.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:30:00] Sometimes the clients, sometimes the client's not so nice, sometimes you know. And so it takes a lot of fortitude.

JVN [00:30:07] So there is so much wisdom in the book, I mean, just so much. But one moment that struck me and that I think it applies across industries is when you described how you long saw yourself as quote "of service to the talent rather than the talent yourself." Can you describe that distinction?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:30:23] Yeah. I mean, you know, when you're a stylist, you're behind the scenes. You're always there for the celebrity or the model. You know, you're there to do what they want, what the photographer wants. And it's never about you. You know, I'd always wear black clothes, so, you know, I wouldn't sort of suck up attention in the studio. Only when I was working but, you know, you were, like, this is what we call it, you're of service. So one day, when digital sort of, when Twitter started and Instagram started and I started sort of finding a community of people who loved my work and had been following me. That was a really, that was the game changer. Like, "Oh, my God. Stylists can actually, you know, step up," and hairdressers, makeup artists, all these people who are, are always probably the lowest on any shoot can actually step forward. It was a great time. It was a great moment.

JVN [00:31:17] So how did you balance that when you were styling and then as you like, come up in your career and you get, like, more senior and more major and your opinion, starts to pull more weight. Like, what if you, like, had pulled something that the photographer liked and the talent liked, but you, like, secretly hated it or just thought something else would look way better? Like—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:31:34] I didn't have any hold back.

JVN [00:31:35] You didn't.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:31:36] Also the older you get, the less patience you kind of have. This kind of situation is, like, "No, yes, no." [JVN LAUGHING] Especially when you're working on fashion shows with designers. It's, like, "No," you know, you just learn, like, it's better to be straight up and honest.

JVN [00:31:53] Mhm. But, like, that wasn't, like, a, like, overnight thing. Like you kind of, like, learn how to find your voice.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:32:59] No, no, not. But from the beginning, you're, like, "Oh my God, you know, I'm making, making money. I'm doing my freelance styling, I'm making money

so I can't." And then as you grow older, you're like, "Actually, I'm here for a reason, not just to put clothes on, but to have a point of view, really." I was a creative director. So that's how my career sort of turned around.

JVN [00:32:15] Your resumé is so fucking major. Like it is just so fucking major. Like, it is, like, it really gives me chills all over my gay body. I love it. So I love in the book how you, like, describe this, like, beautiful, vivid group of friends and people that you have collaborated with. And we talked a little bit about some of them, but, like, can you introduce us to some of the other folks that you mention in the book? And, like, what collaborations from that era are you the most proud of?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:32:41] I mean, I'm proud of the work I did with photographer Craig McDean, and it would be me, Craig McDean, Pat McGrath. We did so many wonderful stories for i-D magazine, then we went on to Italian Vogue and then W Magazine. The work I've done with Steven Meisel in the 2000s, you know, Linda and the plastic surgery story. So many incredible stories, you know. Sozzani. So that was really good. Naomi and Kate, I've sold more times than I can even remember.

JVN [00:33:12] Do you watch Making The Cut? It's on Amazon with, like, Heidi Klum and Tim Gunn. And Naomi is a judge on it. And it's so good. Naomi so fucking good in it. I think if they upgraded her from judge. But then I was thinking, I bet they don't, cause she's probably too busy. Like, she's probably, like, "Bitch. I don't have that to come over." But she is so—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:33:27] She's so busy, she's so busy. She's so good on TV.

JVN [00:33:32] And she's just so funny. Her quip!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:33:35] Remember her modeling show?

JVN [00:33:37] Oh. Oh, my God. It was so. But that was like. I feel like that was, like, wrong time because America was so basic and they were so basic for Tyra. Even though, like, I do love ANTM, I can't help it, well, seasons like one through ten, but that was like really modeling. Somebody's got to go anyway from there. Okay, so here's the other thing. I also loved learning more about your creative process, including how you approach styling as character-driven work, which is really interesting to me because when I first started doing Queer Eye, my friend Denise Bidot is, like, this, like, fierce model and I was like, "Girl, I don't know how to do photo shoots, like, I'm a hair stylist. Like, I don't know how to. Like, I have four poses. Like, I watched ANTM for 15 years but I don't know how to pose." And she was, like, "In your head, Jonathan, you need to think about, like, what the clothes are and then play a character." So, like, you're not yourself on camera. Like if that skirt is making you feel flowy—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:34:25] It's, like, acting!

JVN [00:34:26] Yes, you're Cinderella bitch! If you're feeling really masculine, like, give them, like, architecture, give them, like, butch.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:34:32] Like you're a silent movie star, silent movie star. The best models always are.

JVN [00:34:35] Yes! How do you teach someone to be character-driven and their work?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:34:41] For me, I told you, my work is so researched. The characters are so researched. So let's say if I'm doing a 1920s-inspired character, I have so much references to show you. I have locations. And then I will talk to you as, "This is a character. The character will do this, will do that," like a movie, like a silent movie, and then a great model or great personality knows how to interpret it. Because you are that person, in that time, in that moment. So I think modeling really it a bit, it's like, it's like acting without, without speaking, you know, but really the research is key. Like, I will give you so much about the character. Like, there's no way you won't be that character on set. And it goes right down to the music you play on set.

JVN [00:35:26] Ah!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:35:27] Right. The music you play on set. You know, the clothes obviously play a big part. Hair and makeup play a big part. But the mood is also really important. The set, the mood, yes.

JVN [00:35:37] The mood!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:35:38] The mood, yeah.

JVN [00:35:40] Yesss.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:35:40] I'll give you an example. Like, Kate Moss, when I do a shoot with Kate, if you're playing, like, she's playing a rock 'n roll character, she won't play rock 'n roll music. That's a bit too much of a cliché. She probably listened to blues or something, so that's a bit of something odd, something to play for. So just cos you're playing a disco character doesn't mean you have to have disco music on. Just little things like that.

JVN [00:36:04] Ah! So it's, like, to evoke the feeling as opposed to, like, hitting the feeling right on the head, like, you're evoking something.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:36:10] Exactly. Exactly.

JVN [00:36:12] I love that! You mentioned the concept of "stylist's own" collection in the book. Can you remind us what that term means?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:36:21] Back in the day, you know, we didn't really like using designer clothes. So you'd pull out designer clothes. It's very different from now where we love designer clothes and designers are so different. But back then you had you would go and collect your own pieces from them, whether it's from vintage stores or, you know, just things your parents gave you. And then you would also make the final picture. So let's say we're doing a shoot. And I have this beautiful necklace that I found in the market that becomes "stylist's own" or we find a hat that's vintage, it's not available in designer stores that becomes "stylist's own." So it was very popular back, back then. So you'd see, "Hat from, I don't know, "T-shirt from Katherine Hamnett." "Shorts, stylist's own." So that became part of the language of the time.

JVN [00:37:09] Is there any, like, standout pieces from your personal collection of "stylists's own" that you just, like, love look back on or just, like, you're, like, your most treasured pieces?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:37:19] Oh, you know, in those days, there used to be a store called World in London, the late eighties, early nineties. And, you know, the people who owned it would travel around the world and find, you know, they'd find African bracelets. They'll find necklaces from India. They'll find, you know, I don't know, feathers from America. So I collected so many pieces from them and they made up my shoots back then, but I've still got all of those. World.

JVN [00:37:45] I love that. When I was in Tokyo, I got to, like, live in Tokyo for a month. And when we got to shoot, like Queer Eye: Japan and there's, like, these amazing vintage stores there.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:37:53] Queer Eye's amazing, by the way, it's incredible.

JVN [00:37:54] Thank you! Thank you, thank you, thank you so much! But I got this. I found this, like, Celine bag from like, like mid eighties that, like, I love so much. It's like, I take it everywhere. It's like one of my very favorite things.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:38:05] That's stylist's own!

JVN [00:38:06] My stylist, Ali B, always says the first time I ever heard that, like, a term like that was when she was, like, "Model's own!" because like I would go to a shoot like they wouldn't have anything like that would fit.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:38:16] That's a good one, too. That's a good one, too.

JVN [00:38:16] And she would say, like, "Model's own!" Because it would be like my t-shirt dress would be like the thing I wore to the shoot and they'd be like, "Can we just use that?"

So I have one more question before our rapid fire round. So I come from a newspaper background, like, my family owned newspapers. I grew up, like, in newsrooms and, like, on advertising floors, I grew up, like, running around the layout department, the photography department, like, bothering everyone. It just, like, was such a beautiful time for me and my family's newspaper—actually the whole broadcast company—they sold last year. And our hometown newspaper has been shuttered, like, there is no more physical paper. And if you would have told me when I was five or ten, like, growing up running, like, I used to rollerblade around that like print machine and, like, just wreak havoc in that paper.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:39:00] Wow, what a great childhood!

JVN [00:39:03] It was amazing, but I can't believe that, like, there isn't one there. And as we see, I mean, there is I don't think there is ever a world where, like, Vogue, British Vogue or any of the Vogues, like, where, like, I just I literally can't imagine it. But the print industry as a whole is just going through this, like, mega shift. Do you have any predictions for, like, where are we in 100 years? Like, a really long time. Like, when we are, like, figments of people's imaginations from long times past. Like, where do you think print works into our future. And also if that's, like, a weird thing to ask cause you're like, like we, like, you don't have to answer it.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:39:38] No, you can add it because now I say, you know, even in 2017, I inherited a magazine, but now I run a brand. And that brand includes printed magazines that are probably going to get more and more beautiful, maybe it might be less frequency, it becomes a coffee table object. But that powers video, podcasts, audio events, content. You can't see print in isolation anymore. So that's the future. And for me, with somebody who has so much energy, it's so exciting because, you know, a lot of people, a lot of Vogue readers approach the magazine first through their digital platform, they're, like, "Ah! Vogue!" A whole new generation. So the print will be there. But as this incredible treasured piece that would drive a whole ecosystem.

JVN [00:40:23] So you're not nervous about that?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:40:25] No!

JVN [00:40:26] Like, we're not nervous that it's, like, a gorgeous evolution.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:40:28] Yes! It's an evolution. It's an evolution, definitely.

JVN [00:40:31] Ah! Also not to namedrop at the Emmys this past weekend, I got to wear my first time ever, like, loaner jewels. Like I've never had, like, loaner jewels before. My stylist, Ali, B like, she knows these people in L.A. and they, like, do like those big, gorgeous, like, rich, slut, like, crazy jewels.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:40:46] Fantastic.

JVN [00:40:47] And I got to wear this 11 carat fucking diamond ring for, like, 5 hours. And guess who the only other person that's ever worn that ring was.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:40:58] Who was it?

JVN [00:40:59] Anna fucking Wintour. [EDWARD LAUGHING] So we got to wear the same ring.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:41:05] You're both, you're both icons!

JVN [00:41:09] I mean, in different respects, like, I was, like, I feel bad that my, like, cornfield finger is wearing, like, you know, it's like. It's fine. So as we wrap up, are you into maybe a little fashion rapid fire round?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:41:22] Of course. Of course.

JVN [00:41:24] And we go rounding out our gorgeous episode, which, like, this has been some of the most exciting, like, 54 minutes of my life. Like, I just. I've had so much fun with you, so, okay. Fashion Rapid Fire. Favorite cover shoot?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:41:35] Favorite cover shoot, oh my god, there's been so many. I think I really, really loved the shoot we did with the essential workers in lockdown when we put the, the nurse with the bus driver and the girl who worked in the supermarket because these were people who were out there putting their lives on the line for us every day they left the house. So, you know, that's really special. To me.

JVN [00:42:00] Fuck yes. I love that so much. Most recent source for inspiration?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:42:05] Most recent source for inspiration? I mean, I'm always, I'm always on, you know, TikTok, YouTube, you know, I like what's going on on TikTok, actually, so that's what I'll say.

JVN [00:42:17] There's so much there. Favorite snack while working?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:42:23] Snickers. Chocolate bar.

JVN [00:42:24] Yes. Delicious. A fashion trend you wish would come back?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:42:29] A fashion trend I wish would come back. I was always a big fan of the 1940s. The tight silhouette, Blade Runner, you know. Sean Young.

JVN [00:42:37] Fuck yes. A fashion trend you wish would stay in the past?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:42:43] Another, another seventies flower power moment, I don't know if I can handle.

JVN [00:42:49] Okay. I'm never wearing prints around you, note to self. Okay. A shoot, a shoot that turned out amazing but almost didn't happen.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:42:58] A shoot that turned out amazing but almost didn't happen. Maybe, maybe... oh my god, Naomi Campbell's shoot for the Black issue of Italian Vogue. The cover shoot because I was stuck somewhere. Missed the flight because I was running from one job to another and had to get to L.A. from New York. And somehow the next day when I flew in I was able to still make the shoot. So, yeah, that was a—, and I've never missed a flight in my life.

JVN [00:43:31] Never?!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:43:32] That was close. Not really.

JVN [00:43:34] That's, like, really perfect. Like, that's how. Okay, that's like a note of success. Like, on time, honey. Oh! Person you'd love to collaborate with next?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:43:42] Person I'd love to collaborate with next? Too many to mention.

JVN [00:43:47] Um, I'm trying to think of, like, do you watch Hacks? Do you have Hacks in England?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:43:52] H-A-C-K?

JVN [00:43:53] Yeah, S.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:43:53] Is this the one about the comedian?

JVN [00:43:55] Yes, yeah.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:43:56] I've seen it!

JVN [00:43:57] I'm going to suggest not that you asked but Jean Smart. I love her. She's genius. She's, like, fierce. Like she's having such a renaissance and she's, like, such a wide spectrum actress. Like, she can do hardcore comedy, but hardcore drama. She's just, like, really fierce, I love her. It's like a really brilliantly funny show. Did you see Mare of Easttown?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:44:13] I love Mare of Easttown.

JVN [00:44:14] Mare of Easttown is so good.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:44:15] Yeah! It's, like, one of my favorite TV shows.

JVN [00:44:17] That is the same woman as Kate Winslet's mom in Mare of Easttown.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:44:22] No way.

JVN [00:44:24] That is the same actress.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:44:27] Wow. That's amazing. Las Vegas. [CROSSTALK] Incredible!

JVN [00:44:32] That is, like, that lady with like the bad hip who's like, you know, Mare's mom and she's kind of down on her luck and she's like, helping Mare's kid, you know? She's like, it's like, kind of. That's the same actress I just see. She she's major. I'm obsessed with her.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:44:44] I'm going to seek her out.

JVN [00:44:45] She can do so much character work for you, honey. Like, she'll give you such a range! Item in your closet that would surprise people?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:44:52] That would surprise people? Djellaba.

JVN [00:44:56] What's that?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:44:57] A Moroccan robe.

JVN [00:44:58] Ah, that doesn't surprise me. That sounds really chic. I was thinking something like. Well, yeah, it sounds, like, amazing. It's like. It's, like, really cool.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:45:05] My wardrobe is all black and white clothes.

JVN [00:45:07] What is the best part? This is our final one. Oh, actually no, there is one after this. But this is major. What's the best part of being friends with Rihanna, like, you been at the same room as her. Like you would know her. Like you're, like, like, what's the best part?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:45:19] Oh, she's, she's, she's such a great friend. She's always there when you need her. She's so kind. She's badass. She's everything you've, she's everything you think she is, but really kind. Really kind.

JVN [00:45:31] I love her! What's your favorite TV shows right now?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:45:35] I'm loving Surface. Apple TV with Gugu Mbatha-Raw. She plays this woman who, who falls off a boat and loses her memory.

JVN [00:45:44] Ah! That sounds amazing. Writing it down. Did you see Severance?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:45:50] Where you remove yourself from work, right? You remove yourself. Is it good?

JVN [00:45:53] It's amazing. The first three episodes are, like, a little slow—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:45:56] Don't you find it's always the first three episodes, always a bit.

JVN [00:45:59] Yeah, but it's like the finale is like not to oversell it, but it's like one of the best finales of all time. It's, like, so good.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:46:05] You're giving me a lot in this conversation.

JVN [00:46:06] You would also like Big Boys. Our really good friend Jack wrote it. Jack is, Jack is really good friends with Nicola Coughlan from Bridgerton and Derry Girls and ooh actually! You should work with Nicola. Like Nicola Coughlin, like—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:46:18] I love Nicola.

JVN [00:46:19] Ah! Ah!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:46:20] She comes to my events.

JVN [00:46:21] I'm, like, her unofficial PR person, but like, you know, would look great on the cover of British Vogue?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:46:27] She's amazing.

JVN [00:46:27] I mean, her little face. Could you imagine her cute little? Like. [SUPERMODEL POSE SOUNDS]

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:46:32] Oh, she's amazing.

JVN [00:46:33] She would give you, like, so much fashion. So we love her. We love Bridgerton. Yeah, we love all the TV. To wind down on a note of queer joy. Munroe said that your wedding was incredible—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:46:43] Of course!

JVN [00:46:43] And that we'd have to ask you for details ourselves and the spirit of celebration and because it's in the book. Can you share any highlights with us there? Like what was like the most special moment for you in the wedding?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:46:52] I mean, of course, the most special moment was sort of standing there with my husband. We've been together for 20 years and sharing our vows. But most people said it looked like a rap battle because I went, then he went. He killed it. And then, of course, there's that moment that I write about in the book when my friend Emma Weymouth, the Marchioness of Bath, was conducting the ceremony and says, "If there's anyone in this room who's got something to say, please say it now." You know, I'm paraphrasing and in walks Rihanna in full Alaia, pregnant. That was a moment. And then my friend Natasha Poonawalla had this dress on that was like a cloud. I mean, it was the most incredible Schiaparelli dress.

JVN [00:47:30] Wait, so you're telling me that when the officiator of the wedding said, like, "Does anyone have anything to say? Like, speak now or forever hold your peace." And then fucking Rihanna—

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:47:39] Doors open, looking incredible.

JVN [00:47:44] That's probably—, you're—, that, you must. I'm speechless. It's hard for me to not have words. I think they say you must be the only person in history who's ever had a Rihanna, like, cameo. I mean, not only that, she cameo, she was, like, there for the whole time, but like, I don't think I mean, that's the only time in history that's ever happened. Like, ever. Like.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:48:06] [LAUGHTER] Probably!

JVN [00:48:09] That is so fucking cool!

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:48:13] Oh, thank you. It was fun, it was fun.

JVN [00:48:14] Oh my, god. So last question. I swear to God. Finally, there's a quote from the book that I think captures your contributions to the world really beautifully. "Black people should see themselves and fairy tales," you say, "as they should be seen everywhere else in culture." What does that statement mean to you?

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:48:33] It means that, you know, that, you know, a lot of times in fairytales, in history, Black people are always erased and it'd be nice, you know—and I think it's happening now with this colorblind casting like Bridgerton and, you know, lots of other TV shows— where Black people are just there. They're visible, you know, they're a part of history.

And I really, really love that. And I do the Pirelli cast based on Alice in Wonderland, where there was an all-Black cast, you know, Whoopi Goldberg, RuPaul, my favorite. And it was a beautiful thing. So, you know, Black people need to—Black kids, especially growing up—need to see themselves reflected. I always say this, “If you can see it, you can be it.”

JVN [00:49:15] Ah! Oh, my God. I just can't think of a possibly better way to end that episode than on that note. Edward, thank you so much for your time, for your genius, for your talent.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:49:23] Thank you so much for having me, I've really enjoyed myself. And I've been dying to meet you, too. I've been dying to meet you, you were always, like, my—, whenever I used to watch the show, you were, like, I'm like, “That's my best friend. But he doesn't know it yet.”

JVN [00:49:34] Ummm, now I do! And we will be taking this silly computer screen out from betwixt us in future so we can meet in real life.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:49:41] Definitely.

JVN [00:50:42] Cause literally in New York for Fashion Week, like as we speak.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:50:46] It's going on right now.

JVN [00:50:49] Like I could die that you took your time for us on such a, like, momentous occasion. Like, we are so grateful for you. You are so beautiful. You are so major. Thank you so much for coming on, Getting Curious. We love you, Edward. We have to have you back.

EDWARD ENNINFUL [00:50:00] Thank you. I'll be back.

JVN [00:50:04] You've been listening to Getting Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. My guest this week was Edward, Enniful, OBE. You'll find links to his work in the episode description of whatever you're listening to the show on. Our theme music is “Freak” by Quiñ - thanks to her for letting us use it. If you enjoyed our show, introduce a friend, honey, and show them how to subscribe. It's hard to find all those buttons sometimes! Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @CuriousWithJVN. Our editor is Andrew Carson. Getting Curious is produced by me, Erica Getto, and Zahra Crim.