

Pretty Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Trace Lysette

JVN // Welcome to. Pretty Curious. I'm Jonathan Van Ness and every other week I sit down with a stunning expert to talk all things beauty, skin care, hair care, makeup, self-care and beyond. This week, we're speaking with actress, producer, ballroom legend and beauty icon, Trace Lysette. She recently starred in the film *Monica* as a woman who returns home to care for her dying mother. When the film premiered in 2022 she became the first openly trans actress to lead a film in competition at the Venice Film Festival, the oldest film festival in the world. *Monica* received an interim agreement from SAG-AFTRA in August that allows Trace to discuss it with us today. If you cannot wait to hear that convo, head to the episode description for more info on how far to skip ahead. So just, you know, look down there and you'll see the time marker and where we tell you to skip ahead and get your life there.

But if you wanna see what we're doing here first, it's time for a get ready with me segment. Okay, this week for body care: this is an oldie but a goodie for me you guys. This company is called Herbivore. They do skin care, body care, bath stuff. I'm holding it now, let me give you some ASMR. [Tapping noises] I often get scared when I travel with this that they're gonna think it's cocaine but it's really just Coconut Hydrating Bath Milk Soak. It's this white powder. It comes in a glass jar. I love to take baths with this. The ingredients are sodium bicarbonate, *cocos nucifera*—it's just coconut fruit powder—there's coconut extract and then vanilla. Yeah, vanilla fruit oil. So it's like a really clean formula. There's, there's not too much in it. But what I love about the Herbivore Coconut Hydrating Bath Milk Soak is that when I take a bath with this, I don't have to put on lotion afterwards. Like your skin is so hydrated, so gorgeous but not slippery. It's just really beautiful. It's really relaxing. I find that my skin gets a little bit confused. I get more prone to psoriasis outbreaks. I get more prone to just—which actually I'm just getting over a psoriasis flare up, so I'm feeling so much better—but my skin just gets really dry during seasonal changes. So I love a hydrating bath and then not having to like soak myself in lotion afterwards. So that's my body care rec of the week. I've been using this stuff for years. I love this company: Herbivore, they're amazing. And I'm actually gonna give you guys a another bath soak rec in a couple episodes because uh...but I don't want you guys to have to wait that long. Just look up Pursoma as well. I love Pursoma, you guys are amazing. Small company; love their bath soaks.

Okay, moving on: skin care, skin care rec of the week. Honey, David Yi literally rocking our world: Good light. The Moon Glow Milky Toning Lotion: so gorgeous. You guys, I've been using it. They sent me a new bottle when we recorded a few weeks ago. The consistency is so beautiful. It has this like kind of milky consistency, but I just wanna show you on my arm. It is just so hydrating. It's so light, it just gives you like more vitality. It's really beautiful. It's not greasy. I'll show you in a few minutes, so you can see as it, as it lasts. But the ingredients in this are just incredible. I've been loving what it's been doing to my pores...because really what a toner is meant to do—if you don't know what a toner is for—so obviously, when you're cleaning your skin, you're cleaning your skin and when you wash your face, you want to make sure that you're washing it for at least 60 seconds. But what a toner is gonna do, out of the shower and as the first layer of your skin care routine...it reminds me of that old commercial, like the, the scrubbing bubbles for like the bathroom cleaner: it's just getting in the pores and it's clearing out any crud or excess stuff that's been left behind that your face wash didn't get. It's kind of hard to like, disappear your pores, but if you have a lot of excess oil, sebum or debris, makeup left in your pores that can make your pores look bigger and more inflamed. So toner is good because it's gonna help to reduce the size of your pores by kind of helping to clarify any excess muck in there. So I love what David Yi did with this formula. It is gorgeous. Try it out. I also love a

little another ASMR moment. [Tapping noises] The glass container is stunning. It really feels nice in the hand. I think it's a great price point: \$22, this is gonna last you like a good six months; like it lasts a long time. So I think this is totally worth it. I love it. It's amazing. Get it. It's, it's a fire sale. Just get into it yesterday.

Okay, hair care rec of the week; non JVN hair, another oldie but a goodie: Tancho stick. Okay, this is actually what I have in my hair today to create this slick-back look. So a lot of times you guys when I'm doing my slick-back looks, I will base my hair with like JVN hair Air Dry Cream and then I will use the Tancho stick over that. I kind of like Tancho stick even more than hairspray because it's like a pomade stick. Because it's a pomade, it just kind of like sticks the hair together a little bit more than a hairspray. I feel like a hair spray sits on top of the hair, but this gets like in and amongst the hair and it really like pulls it together. I also really like this, like if you blow your hair out and you do like kind of a '90s blow dry or like some waves in your hair...you know how like on clean hair, it's a little puffy or it doesn't have that like lived-in look? It's just like a little bit puffier. I really like the Tancho stick to give like a more polished, shine lived-in look, but it doesn't make the hair like greasy, but a little bit goes a long way. Like I'll just kind of scrape my pinky nail across the top. It, it looks like a push-up pop. You guys, it's kind of like those like push-up pops. It's like what it's like: you scrape your pinky across. It's got a nice clean scent. It's been around for 10,000 years. I've been using this product since I was like an assistant in L.A. in like 2009. The scent that I like is the lavender one. I wonder what this price point is: for a Tancho stick...eight bucks, it lasts forever. It's also good for men with like short hair or anyone who has short hair. If you just like want a little pieceness, a little texture, it's just like a great multipurpose pomade and I love it. So that's really good. Also, if you're curious about my eyeshadow, social, this is uh Novina which is Anastasia's daughter, and I just did this little like orange graphic eye because honestly, I was late and I didn't have time to do more.

For our final moment, Patrick Ta! You guys, this little skin coverage that I have today: this is Patrick's Face Foundation, it also has a setting powder in it. I just love this stuff. It's got some really gorgeous skincare ingredients in it. It's really seamless. I'm a really big fan of Patrick, I love his line. He's just incredible. If you are looking for a buildable foundation that still lets your skin breathe; but if you want like full, full coverage, you can just like build it more. I don't typically do full coverage. I like a little bit of like my skin to shine through, but it still allows me to do that with just like, you know, a little layer of application. So I love Patrick Ta's line. I love...it's his Four Face Cream Foundation and Finishing Powder Duo. So you have both together. Come on, Patrick! Not only are you gorgeous, uh, but you also are highly talented so good for you, Patrick.

Okay, so beauty news and hot takes. My sense is you guys, I feel like I am seeing a very like '90s nostalgia, a little bit less severe, less edgy. It's a little bit like more girl next door. Like I just, I feel like I'm seeing more like long layers, like softer, very like Los Angeles type hair. So, but you know, I'm not a trend queen. I like to do what makes you feel confident, what makes you feel good. I'm kind of on this like hair growth journey. I've had my hair a little shorter for the last few years and I'm kind of thinking like: how long until I like don't have hair? So like let me just have really long hair again. So I was like, I'm personally growing my hair out right now. But what are y'all doing? We want to know what your, what are your trends? What are you seeing? We wanna know, leave it in our comments on our social post for this. Also, you can submit your questions for Pretty Curious on askjvn.com. So if you have any beauty questions, let's get into that. And also, you know, if you want to get sexier and you have \$3.99 and you wanna go into the paywall, get into our Ask JVN life! It's giving like *Talk Sex with Sue Johansson* except for I'm way less qualified and I'm not a doctor. Um I'm just, you know, a slut who has a lot of opinions. So, you know, take that with what you will. But without further ado, let's get to our conversation with actress, producer, and overall legend: Trace Lysette! Trace Lysette, welcome to Pretty Curious. How are you?

TRACE LYSETTE // Hi, honey. I'm good. How are you?

JVN // I'm really good and I feel like people may not know, but I've had the pleasure of knowing you for like, like I feel like I've known you for a long time. I feel like I would, it's giving me like eight years or something.

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, it's been probably 8, 7/8 years, right?

JVN // Because I left L.A. in 2016. But I was living in Los Feliz for the last couple of years of that. But I remember when Johnny introduced us, I think I was living in Culver City which I left that apartment a week after the election of 2016. I remember it like yesterday, so that means it was before 2016...

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, definitely pre-Hollywood in some ways.

JVN // Ah, I'm so lucky that I get to know you because I, I just, I—so lucky. And also I just have to say because I haven't gotten to talk to you. I'm just, I mean, we DM and we like, I follow all of the things that I've just, I got to say....

TRACE LYSETTE // I know and you send me your luxurious shampoo, which I love, by the way! I use it all the time.

JVN // Oh my God, your hair looks so good. Oh my God. It makes me so happy. But I just, I just am so proud of you and I love you so much and I'm so excited. I just am so excited for you and I'm so excited that people got to see what you are... *Monica* is just incredible and I haven't gotten to gush on you yet in public. I'm just really fucking proud of you.

TRACE LYSETTE // Thank you, babe. Thank you so much. Yeah, *Monica* was a labor of love. You know, it's, it's taken about a decade for me to get the shot to show the world my chops and finally lead a film. So it just feels, feels sweet in a lot of ways. In other ways, it feels like a hard fought win and uh you know, I guess it's on God's time, not my time. And uh yeah, I'm just, I'm trying to stay in the love as my sister Laverne says.

JVN // Absolutely. I, I feel what you're saying and I write and do a lot of comedy about like duality and it's, there's just...

TRACE LYSETTE // It's everywhere, it's everywhere, it's life.

JVN // Yes, it really keeps us flexible as Nadia Comăneci, emotionally and mentally, in 1972 honey, before the growth spurt when no one was stepping to Miss Nadia.

TRACE LYSETTE // Right. Wait, was that before her perfect 10? Or after?

JVN // No, that was during, yeah, '72 was Olga Corbett, '76 was Nadia Comăneci. And then in '80 was the boycott of games was like the all communist games and Nadia had, had this growth spurt and she got like 2nd and 3rd and everything...is like the defending champion because she, you know, she got a little Dominique Moceanu in like, you know, '96/'98. I, I went deep on a Wikipedia. I'm gonna go away from that now. But anyway, if people follow you on Instagram—uh which they should uh—or just know of your work, you are so stunningly beautiful and you are...I don't know how it's possible but it is true that you are like, you're stunning on camera, but in real, like in, in all the ways you're just so stunning. So what's it like to get ready with Trace Lysette? Like is there a little thing that you're super obsessed with right now? Like, and also what's like a general getting ready with Trace Lysette like?

TRACE LYSETTE // Well, first of all, thank you for that compliment! People...you know, I've been thinking about this a lot lately—sorry to, to not get to the products right away—but like, I'm just thinking about beauty and, and how for a while, I don't know, people have

often thrown around that word “stunning” and, and “bombshell” when, when they talk about me. But I think it's this very weird, again, duality that I sit in as a transsexual woman because in some ways that still has not been accepted by the mainstream. So it's, it might appear as one thing on the outside where in reality I, I sit here and wonder why I, why I can't get a branding deal to save my life. You know why I can't find a husband, you know, and I think a lot of that has to do with being this kind of forbidden fruit. And so it is bittersweet because it feels, it feels nice when people say, “Oh, you're beautiful, you're stunning, you're sexy,” whatever. But lately I'm like questioning what even, what even do those compliments mean, if all of the things that normally come with those compliments don't come with those compliments.

JVN // Have our, have I not...I love how I get so codependent so fast. Have we submitted the head shots to like Wilhelmina and the IMG and like just like the... you are a model! She's a full, high fashion model and everyone knows it.

TRACE LYSETTE // I think it's two parts. And yes, we have explored modeling. I was with a, a boutique modeling agency for over a year in New York City. One of the best ones actually and didn't land a single gig. I think it's two parts. I think it's the trans thing. And I also think it's the curvy thing because I have a, like a, you know, kind of like a 1950's bombshell kind of shape. And II, I mean, we're coming up on 100 year anniversary of that term “blond bombshell” being coined for, I guess it was Harlow, Jean Harlow, then Marilyn Monroe after and Jane Mansfield. And I've kind of just been waiting for that to come back around in style, but I feel like it's still not the end thing. Yeah, so I think, I think about that a lot. I think about where, where the roadblock; is the glass ceiling, all of that, what it means to be a vivacious kind of vavoom, transsexual woman in today's marketplace. And is that marketable? And how many other, you know, facets of me do people need to see in order for it to be digestible or marketable? But I am, I am kind of a tomboy surprise, surprise. Like I shoot hoops. I go to the track, I work out like 5,5 or 6 days a week for not just, you know, for, for my physical but for my mental health because I do, I do try to find, like, natural ways to cope with some of my, I guess my mental health journey. And I, I think for me natural is better and working out and those endorphins that I get from that tend to be the best thing. So I do like a clean, fresh look. I don't really go for full coverage unless I'm doing, like, a red carpet. And even then sometimes I don't, I don't really go for all of the coverage. I like dewy, glossy skin. I'm obsessed with this Fenty Beauty Rose Rave Diamond Bomb. That's probably what you see on my cheeks. My average day is just some mascara and some Chanel concealer and you know, a bun.

JVN // Are you a sunscreen queen?

TRACE LYSETTE // I am a sunscreen queen. Yes, there's this one that I spray on. I would have to go get it for you...

JVN // Because the skin is just giving protected, even, gorgeous: no sun damage. Sun? I don't know her! Like yes! And also sidebar, your athletic content on social—because I love a little gymnastics moment, I love my little tennis, my little pickle ball moments on social—I just love your athletics and I just love it. And how do you sprint like that? And did you watch the World Championships? Because I was all over the World Track Championships this year for the first time ever. It was all Sha'Carri for me.

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, I live for Sha'Carri; I live for all of those ladies. I live for Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce. She's like 30, what, 36,8, something like that, you know, and just Mommy Rockets still running 10 6's in the 100. Track was my first love. I mean, it was my first love. I wanted to be a track star and um, Flo-Jo was my icon growing up and I mean, I had long nails like her in high school and I don't know, I just wanted to...I just, she's the most beautiful woman to me, ever. She's still the lock screen on my phone. You know, it's just

very nostalgic for me. So yes, I get all into the World Championships, especially with the ladies and Sha'Carri delivered this year and I live for her. I I just feel her soul in her whole journey. But I live for all of those ladies: Shericka Jackson is amazing. She's really approaching Flo-Jo's record in the 200 which I'm excited to see. Yeah...

JVN // I saw that!

TRACE LYSETTE // Sometimes I do a little sports play-by-play on my stories because I think if I wasn't acting, maybe I would be a sports announcer of some sort.

JVN // A commentator: Trace Lysette is really...I'm here for that. Okay, so Flo-jo, I, I will say um: it's making sense to me now. Like your like sense of fashion and like gorgeosity of skin is giving me like professional, gorgeous superstar, like athlete who then became an actress. Also, you've gone lighter with your hair—a sidebar—I feel like. I feel like you were giving me like brunette.

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, I was brunette, brunette and curly. You know, I was giving you my Italian side for years. And now, I don't know, I'm embracing this blonde and I like to play with colored shampoo, you know, Manic Panic dyes and all of that. And I would love to get more daring with my hair for red carpets and stuff. I think sometimes I'm just like, still trying to find my go-to person for your hair and makeup and like put together my whole team, so it's a well oiled machine. And I, I guess, I don't know, I'm still, I'm still waiting for my, for my moment when I can figure all that out.

JVN // Oh my, I got recs.

TRACE LYSETTE // I actually have one hair guy that I, I actually love. I just need, yeah, I need a reason to use him more. So maybe this year with *Monica*, I don't know, we'll see what happens this award season. Let's manifest.

JVN // I'm manifesting so hard my nipples almost just fell off. Like I'm so scared, like, I have to go find them. I just...

I have a twofold question here which is, like, what's your beauty philosophy? And how do you practice that day-to-day? How does that express itself in terms of, like—I think we've already got skin care—but like hair care, body care...like, what are the things that you are just like really into, really love, swear by; keeping in mind that, you know, there are probably cis-hets that listen to this, so your really good secrets: you don't have to fucking tell anybody, ok? You can keep your, you whatever our really good shit. But, but anything you feel like sharing, you know, no pressure in giving them the really good stuff.

TRACE LYSETTE // Okay, so I'm, I'm really into skincare. I mean, that's the foundation for me. I, I have this L'Oreal Age Perfect Moisturizer that I slather on. It has SPF; I think it's the one that Viola Davis is in the commercials for. I don't know, I saw it one day and I just became obsessed with it because it smells good, it tastes good and it has sunscreen in it. Don't ask me why I know it tastes good. No, but I've had people kiss me and tell me it tastes good. I also like...I also like to exfoliate. I cannot stand dead skin. So I exfoliate everything, like sugar scrubs on my body. I like Joanna Vargas Turmeric Exfoliation Mask. It is worth the 70 bucks or whatever. I did a short film years ago with Zosia Mamet and Evan, her husband, and they got me this little care package that they left in the hotel for me and it had this exfoliator and I used it before I went on camera and I couldn't believe that my skin was just like glass. It was just, it was spotless. So texture wise, that's what I, I fall in love with. And I like the good old gold can L'Oreal Brushable Hair Spray. I like a brushable...

JVN // I...Elnett! I literally have my Elnett right here.

TRACE LYSETTE // It's a staple!

JVN // Y'all, everybody, everybody knows Elnett! You know, do you know what's like a really good trick for this? You spray it and then you use the can to like rub it on your hairline to smooth it like...

TRACE LYSETTE // Yes, I've seen people do that. Yes. Rub me with the can!

JVN // I love that. It's like such a little trick. Rub it with the can! Joanna Vargas, she also has really good um eye patches.

TRACE LYSETTE // She does!

JVN // And then what was I gonna say about exfoliating? Uh, how often... like are you like a once a week queen? Like do we do it all the time? What's your deal?

TRACE LYSETTE // I'm a twice a week exfoliation queen. And even on the days when I'm not doing the Joanna Vargas Exfoliator, I'll do just like a good wash cloth with Cetaphil to, to just get it reset, yes.

JVN // Cetaphil's a classic too. So recommended. I don't know if you saw this... This is like a slight brouhaha on TikTok. How on TikTok are you?

TRACE LYSETTE // Oh my God, I have tried on TikTok. I try, but I don't think I'm very good at it. I tried to do a day at the track. It's so... I left it up. I did like a, "Come to the track with me," and I started to film and literally I was doing my warm up. I, I sat the camera down and I was filming my warm up and then I got back and I was like, "I don't wanna do this." So, so I just edited into the video like, "Oh my God, I hate this. I stopped." And then just like, posted it.

JVN // That's cute. That's cute. But that's personality. People love that. But there was this big brouhaha on TikTok that I saw where like Hoda Kotb, and they were, they were talking on the Today Show about like if people wash their legs in the shower or not. And I think Hoda was like, "Oh, I don't really wash mine because doesn't the soap just kind of like roll down there," and then someone else was like, and then she's like, "Wait, you all wash your legs really hard?" Like you were like, I was like, I was like, "Yeah, I feel like I do, I do, I wash my legs!" Do you, do you wash your legs in the shower?

TRACE LYSETTE // Well I do because I use like a sugar scrub or I shave and I'm so, I'm usually doing one or the other. So there's getting, it's getting some exfoliation and some and some water and some lathering going on. Um, but I, I have heard people say that and I try to, you know, to each their own.

JVN // So what is it...so I feel like if you had to give like an elevator pitch of your beauty philosophy, but it can be more than two sentences, like, what is your beauty philosophy?

TRACE LYSETTE // I would say more and more it's: go with your feeling. It's uh, depends on how much energy you have to put into whatever is gonna make you feel good that day. So if, if that day you're feeling effortless and washed face and moisturized and supple and that's a little mascara and that's all you wanna do, then do that. But, uh, if it's a day when you feel like going over the top or giving a look or making bitches mad, then go with that. And, and I, like most people, you know, I feel different on different days and I think that's okay! I think that you should have fun with it and also do according to what you can and you know, have the effort to do. Uh, because let's, let's be real: being femme sometimes it's a lot, being a girl is a lot! You know, it's some days I don't want to do it; some days it's just a bun and some Jordans and my jeans and I'm hitting it to do whatever I gotta do. But other days I, I wanna, you know, make bitches mad. I wanna make, I wanna make them feel it, you know what I mean or whatever. [Laughter]

JVN // Um okay, so is that—like more and more like going with your feeling and like letting that be how you express your beauty—is that approach changed over the years or is it kind of always been like that?

TRACE LYSETTE // I think that in the beginning of my transition—just like, you know, my teen years—it was exploratory...being feminine and all of that was always with me. I was the flaming queen on the playground who stuck out and, you know... listen, I would square up and fist fight if I had to, but it was the queen. And so it was like, “Ok, she's feminine but she's stern...don't mess with her.” And then like in terms of self expression, it was like bits and pieces came out through adolescence. And then, you know, I was so unique in my youth with my style. It was like very, I guess it would be very non, like non-binary back in the nineties, you know, we called it androgynous. Uh, I had the, the finger waves like Missy Elliot and the long nails and the, and the Fubu jeans and the Timbs and it was giving cunt but like, you know, around the way cunt, and um and then as I began to transition and take estrogen and bloom as a woman, I started to, you know, kind of feel more hyper-femme, or I felt like I had to feel more hyper-femme. And it wasn't until, I don't know, maybe a decade into living every day as a woman or presenting as a woman that I started to feel like, “God, this is a lot to, to, to put on and I miss, I miss the side of me that, that played sports and was also a tomboy. And why can't those things coexist because we are not one thing; none of us have one thing.” And so I, I had to kind of, it took a while to kind of figure it all out and understand that different days are gonna be different things. And I, and I don't have to be one thing.

JVN // I love that. It's so beautiful. I was thinking about how I loved that you embodied that earlier, but I loved it...how you put words to that. Okay, so, so whether you're headed to set or a red carpet, you are not a stranger to the hair and makeup chair. How has HMU helped you embody different characters like Monica. Like as an actress, like does that relationship in the glam chair, does that help you bring a lot more to the character?

TRACE LYSETTE // Oh yeah! I mean, hair and makeup, it helps me with my character work incredibly because I feel like it's getting into uniform and if you've ever worked a job where you had to have a uniform, it definitely tells you what time it is, right? So with Monica, it was very bare bones. I mean, it was just; it was just raw skin, no foundation, maybe a little mascara, natural waves, diffused waves with some good curl cream and just being raw. That's, that was the through line for me was to just be...bare my soul in that film. And uh I wore jeans and a button down and, and some Timberland boots most of the movie. And I think just being stripped away like that, left room to really center the performance and the intimacy of that character: Monica demanded, she demanded that. There was no room for anything contrived. There was no room for anything artificial. It was very internal, very real, very raw and open every single day. I think I was naked or crying or both on every single day on set. But so you, you know, the the hair and makeup, there was something empowering about doing less and letting it just be stripped away to the point where it's like, “Okay, this is me getting to bear my soul for the audience, for Monica, for this experience, for every Monica across the land.” Who I, you know, I get, I get letters from trans women all over the world who deeply identify with her and her journey and, and, and the movie. So yeah, it was freeing, it was freeing to just not have to do very much in terms of that, with her. It was beautiful simplicity I think

JVN // Has Monica—after having played her—like, has she informed your sense of beauty now? Has she been part of your evolution of like however I want to express, or like has any of the characters that you played kind of affected your long term sense of beauty and self-expression?

TRACE LYSETTE // I'm not sure. I think, I think because I've, I've already lived such a full life, you know, I'll be 42 next month. I kind of already found my groove and understand the variety of, of what I have to give on a, on any given day in terms of like hair and makeup and beauty. But, if she did teach me anything, it's that, um, I felt beautiful with nothing on. I really did. You know, I felt beautiful in that movie. Just the freckles and the, the different textures on my skin and actually uh felt youthful in a way that I was surprised to kind of feel.

JVN // Yeah, I mean 42 isn't old and not to be like... but like, I, you could knock me over with a feather because you're not only feeling youthful, that you look so youthful. I thought like you're so good honey. Like, yeah, I also think aging is like a privilege. So like I just want to make it like 84 and I like hope someone's gonna want to like eat my ass the whole time. Oh I hope Mark comes through!

TRACE LYSETTE // Here's to ass-eating in our 80s.

JVN // Yes! Like I just don't want to get shigella. Yeah, I don't want shigella in my 80s because like my immune system will probably just have had it. So like, I hope I just...yeah, but like it's probably gonna be fine.

TRACE LYSETTE // Probably.

JVN // Anyway...uhh it's probably gonna be fine. You are a leader, you are really talented, you are someone who people look up to in our community; I feel like I get a lot of questions about confidence and I would imagine that you get a lot of questions about how you feel confident and which also kind of pisses me off sometimes because I'm like, "Why wouldn't I be confident?" But if someone is struggling with like expression, or like beauty or how they wanna, like, see themselves in the world: do you have any advice?

TRACE LYSETTE // Mmm. That's a tough one. I think for me, confidence came, it came out of survival and uh not letting them win because I was, I was heavily bullied as a kid, as a femme kid. And I think being, being reared in the ballroom scene also kind of like...there wasn't room for you to give them an inch because they would take it and run with it. And so it was very much like, "No girl, I know I'm that girl," and that is in itself is contagious and rejecting the fact that this world tells me, "I'm not that girl." I mean, look at Beyoncé, she made a whole album about it. She even has a song called "That Girl." It's saying to the world, "This is how you're gonna treat me because I know I deserve... I know I deserve what everyone else deserves." And that's a hard thing to learn, but it's almost like putting on a character sometimes. It's like, uh you've heard the term: if you're not buying it I'm not buying it or, you know, whatever that is. It's like I have to know it, even on the days when I may not know it, I have to at least try to fake it till I make it. And um, I'm not gonna let them see me sweat. So I don't know, you know, I don't have it every day and some days, some days I lock myself in the house and I'm under the covers and I don't feel like shit and I don't feel beautiful. Uh, but I think when I go out to the world, especially in this industry, I do my best to put on my armor and some of my armor is confidence and um just knowing my worth. So I say all that to say: it just takes practice, it takes practice to, to know what you deserve and to be in your confidence. And it's okay if you don't have it every day, not everyone....nobody has it every day. The most beautiful people on this earth don't have it every day. And beauty is subjective anyway. So fuck all that.

JVN // Oh my God, I'm resonating so hard. I'm like gonna sprain my neck.

Okay, so I wanna get into ballroom. I also have like one more question that's like kind of a long one... Okay, so is there anything, let's say you had like a bestie or like let's say it's like Johnny Sibilly or like me or it's like someone but like, but we don't know anything about being on camera and it's like your wedding day or like the first time you're going on camera, like you're gonna go do carpet or something. Has there ever been like a thing

where you're like, "Don't do this!" Because on camera...like this one time, I used like bronzer instead of topics on my hairline, this like brown bronzer on my hairline to try to like fill in my hairline. But then in the camera, it just, I had these like floating deep brown islands in my hair recessions and I was like, it's better to just have like, you know, my natural hairline then like a weird brown smudge that isn't the texture of hair. Uh because you could really tell that someone basically colored like brown crayon like right in my like ICD hairline area. Not cute! So like, I would not advise that. Have you learned any like thing like, "Don't do this, or like do do this, it looks really good on flash," or something?

TRACE LYSETTE // Oh yeah! I mean, I think a lot of makeup artists will go to the traditional contour of my whatever...I guess they try to like, make the cheekbones higher or something. Uh, but what I find with my face; my jaw is already kind of prominent. And so when you, when you put the bronzer too high or you're contouring or you and then you're, you're highlighting the jaw, it's almost like, it makes my face bottom-heavy. So I'm like, "No, no, no, no, just do some bronzer, hit the bronze, they're a little lower, you know, make me a little more ovals and I don't even mind if you contour my jaw, but just like, don't, don't make my face bottom-heavy." Um, that's one thing I have to kind of constantly tell makeup artists.

JVN // Well, that's the thing with contour. It's like, if you know what you're doing like for sure. But ultimately, the way that contour works is like dark colors, like, recede the area or make it appear like smaller and light colors, like open it and make it appear bigger. So if you put the shading or the lightening on the wrong part of the face, you can end up accentuating. So if you don't really understand your face shape or especially I think if you're like newer to make up like that's giving like graduate level like 201, like 202, like, you know, like that's like your sophomore year of makeup, like the contouring bit. So like, if you don't know what's up, then—especially if you're a makeup artist is what I hear Trace saying—don't go ham if you don't know how to do it.

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, or just understand that everybody's face is unique. Everybody's face shape is unique and people are gonna need contouring in different areas and maybe just ask the person instead of just going into autopilot like, "Oh well, I'm just gonna contour this and highlight this and you know," and instead of taking into account that everybody's perimeter of their face is different and you have to be custom.

JVN // Absofuckinglutely! Yass! Okay, so now we're going into the ballroom. So you're also no stranger to New York's ballroom scene. Can you share what ballroom is and what it means to you.

TRACE LYSETTE // Ballroom is an entire culture. It is a saving grace for a lot of queer and trans people, specifically youth. As a young person in New York, just finding my way on my own, I was lucky to fall into the arms of the icon Stanley Milan who is a legendary "New Way" Voguer. He does like "Stretch" and "New Way", which is the style of Vogue that he is an expert in. He also walks labels and some other things: Sex Siren and whatnot. But he was a father to me in every way. I mean, you know, beyond walking balls and, and the competition aspect, it was crying on his shoulder for various life's hardships or you know, him helping me move brown boxes throughout Brooklyn. I don't even know how many times I moved in my twenties, but like I was going through a lot and um he was always there for me. And it was just like a family aspect that I was craving and needing and deserving of at the time. So ballroom to me, the through-line for ballroom is family and the competition for me is secondary. But I think in a world that isn't built to validate trans people, queer people, people of color; I think it's a space that says, "Oh no, we're gonna celebrate everything that you were put down for or bullied for your entire life up until this point. We're actually gonna celebrate those things." So for me as a transsexual woman, as a

femme queen—that's what we call it in the ballroom scene—if you are a trans woman on hormones and you walk those femme queen categories, they celebrate your femininity, which is probably something that you were put down from or rejected from your family from or bullied for your whole life. Um, and so all of a sudden you're winning a trophy for being this thing that the world told you was bad. And that's what it was for me, in the very early like 2001, 2002. Those years were so important for me to just go and feel loved and to try and feel beautiful because I wasn't always whatever you're seeing now. Like I...it was a process. I didn't, I didn't pop out like this, you know, it was a hard fought win. So those years for me were really important and, and just having that family, you know, I don't think I'd be alive if I didn't have my family in the ballroom scene

JVN // Thank you so much for sharing that. I also hate when I get like, weird... I just, thank you for sharing that and I love you so much. So how has ballroom like, shaped your sense of like beauty and self expression? Because there was like this formative years, you're around this, like, gorgeous artistic expression and just it's like beautiful diversity of artistic expression. Like, how did that shape your sense of beauty?

TRACE LYSETTE // Oooof. Well, ballroom is unapologetic. I think, I think queer culture and queer beauty: it's always been uh like a little louder than whatever the mainstream trend is. And so in a lot of ways, it's the hyper femininity, it's the uniqueness. Again, another Beyoncé reference; an alien superstar, she talks about being unique. And um I don't know, it's just this unapologetic, cutting edge thing that for some people could be seen as like tacky or over the top. But I think...I think if you do it right, it can be a new trend. And so, individuality is another word that comes to mind. Like, I pulled from the femme queens of the '90s like Octavia St. Laurent and Jennifer Legend and Angine Milan and Angine Mugler, just those women, Tracey Africa, you know, I, I remember seeing Misha Milan walk a ball one time and she had this bun; she had this bone-snatch bun with these shades and she was just...she came out pumping and she knew exactly when to take off the shades and sell it to the room. And you know, those women watching them, molded me in a way that learned how to kind of sell it or move a crowd. Again, going back to confidence, it was just like, "I know what I am and I know what I deserve. I know that might make you feel uncomfortable, but I'm not any less deserving." And there's a saying in the ballroom scene that is: make them know it, make them know it. And I, I try to do that, any time I hit a carpet or anything, I'm always trying to make them know it. It just, uh, you know, it's like, "Learn me boo. You know, like this is me and I'm not gonna apologize for being me." And so that, I think that just radiates it radiates outward and the ballroom scene just, just kind of taught me that, that inner light. I was also a teenage drag queen. So some of that is all melded together. You know, that was my intro to entertainment and womanhood.

JVN // Sidebar: also not to keep like being like, have you tried this and that, but what have... have we done our, have you done a memoir yet? Like when's the book deal happening?

TRACE LYSETTE // No, I haven't.

JVN // Because like, growing like, coming up in the '90s and early aughts in New York City...

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, I was born in Kentucky, raised in Dayton, Ohio; moved out when I was 18, visited New York when I was 19. Yeah, it was just, and, uh, I think for me it was just, it was a very interesting time because the '90s were coming to an end and, yeah, I, I don't know. The world in terms of, like, being trans back then, the world didn't know what to do with us. And all we had were these talk shows where you would see Mimi Marks and all of these other women, you know, um Caroline Cossey, Paris France.

JVN // I remember a few like trans men too. Like intersex people who were like, their gender was male, but they were assigned female at birth because they were intersex. I feel like I remember, like seeing like one or two of those type of people but it was like almost tabloid fodder or like click bait of the time because like before internet. But like, it's like if someone said that on like the Jerry Springer show, like, "Come back for this," like then you were gonna watch, it was tabloid fodder.

TRACE LYSETTE // It was very tabloid and it was so unfortunate because we know that trans people have been here since the beginning of time and our history has basically just been erased or omitted. And so to—I think the masses—some people still think that being trans is a new thing and it's definitely not. It's been here since the beginning of time. Uh, our trans-cestors, you know, in different cultures were actually revered. And so it's frustrating when we don't get to see our history in the same way or our examples of our stories. Um, there's just so much, so much to uncover. But yeah, it was, it was definitely an interesting time and, and at some point I will write a memoir. I'm not, not ready to do that until I'm older. If I'm, if I'm, if I'm lucky or blessed enough to live to be 80...

JVN // You're gonna keep us waiting that long?! But what about like a Maya Angelou approach where it's like, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" that gets us from like birth to like, you know, now, then you like then like the follow-up. You could like that follow up could be more in like, you know, maybe 20 years. That could be like part two. And then I, no pressure, I'm just saying I would read the fuck out of it. It would be an NYT best fucking seller.

TRACE LYSETTE // Ohhh, it would be juicy. I mean, it would be definitely would... oof, when you think about the affairs and the...

JVN // Oh, come on, Trace!!!!!!

TRACE LYSETTE // There's a lot there!

JVN // You can just start writing stuff, just start writing stuff. It doesn't have to go anywhere, just pour it out on a screen somewhere.

TRACE LYSETTE // I did write an outline at one point in time and then I realized, "Oh my goodness, there's a lot of trauma here that I'm not ready to dive into until I feel safe." Now, when that safe feeling comes, I don't know. I have a feeling it might be maybe after this year. I think I need to kind of get to that plateau, that point, first before I can dive back into my life's journey and, and all that comes with it. You know, and I, and I wouldn't want to do it if I had to half-ass it or censor myself. There's a lot of things that are touchy with family, with love, you know, men in the public eye, just shit that I don't know if I could even go there in the way that I would want to; or feel safe to, until I reach a different place in my life. But I hear you. Yeah, someday.

JVN // That's a really good shout because I thought I was ready and then I got the most intense vulnerability hangover I've ever had. And that shit lasted like a couple of years. I feel like I only came out of that hole like just a little bit ago. So, uh that's a really good shout.

VM FROM TIA // This is Tia, and I desperately need your help. So I'm in the military so my hair is in a bun every single day. I don't slick it back. I don't use any product because I have so much breakage. Yeah, I just have really thin hair and I...it's so shitty. So I was wondering number one, what I should do to take care of it. I've watched every single one of your videos, so I have like a pretty decent idea. But also, what am I doing on the days that I'm not washing my hair? Like do I get it wet? Do I rinse it? Do I put other shit in there? I need your help, it's so bad!

JVN // Tia, we've got you covered. I know what I would say. Do you have thoughts, Trace?

TRACE LYSETTE // I have a thought for those off-days when you wanna feel like you've done something but you don't quite know what to do. I think, I love a spritz and then a bun and let it dry for an hour and then pull it down and it's got this wave and it's good. You don't have to use a lot of product, so it looks fuller than it is. And yeah, it's not weighed down. I don't know. What do you say?

JVN // Uh, that's a real...so basically you're saying like, do like a little bit of like a light leave in, uh not so it's soaking wet; just like do a light little mist. Do a loose little top bun with a little hair tie, but don't let it fully dry because we're not getting any creases in here, honey. And then we're just taking her out and we're doing...it's almost like a quick little heatless wave set.

TRACE LYSETTE // A heatless wave set, yes! With just like a, a nice little neat, even a neat bun with a bobby pin. You let that kind of, do it's thing.

JVN // Bobby pin, yes!

TRACE LYSETTE // You know, like, do, do that first and then do the rest of your "zhuzh" and then pull that down before you step outside or whatever and it'll be bouncy and wavy. I mean, I kind of just throw my hair up in a bun when I don't know what to do with it and then pull it down later and I want a little wave and I don't feel like putting heat on it, you know?

JVN // You do have that really lucky hair, though, where it's like, it's like wavy naturally. Like you have like that. It's like really pretty hair. Like it's like, actually actually we both kind of do, it's like kind of like, I mean, we deserve like we deserve like wins...

TRACE LYSETTE // We deserve wins.

JVN // I don't want to... no we do it like... I don't want to like, like I'll probably wake up with my hairline in the pillow tomorrow, so like, please don't come for my universe! But uh...

TRACE LYSETTE // Do you have Italian in you? I feel like that's the Italian in me.

JVN // I did just get...I did just get like 23andMe. It's funny you ask and it turns out I am 1.9% Italian!

TRACE LYSETTE // Ay, paisan! Which part? Southern or...

JVN // It said Southern! It did, it said Southern!

TRACE LYSETTE // Okay, yes!!!!

JVN // And I was like, "Oh my God, is that like why I do, like get like really like, I get like a gorgeous tan in my little, like wavy brown hair like, arrivederci honey!" I didn't even know, but I was like, I was like, you know, mostly like 99% or 90 very, mostly English and Irish. I will say it was a little, I wanted to get like, whatever, whatever it's whatever. Okay, so Tia though, for this tight, militaristic bun that you're having to rock, uh I'm not trying to like hock my shit: but uh whether it's my pre-wash scalp oil, you need some sort of scalp treatment for that tension for the alopecia for that, just for any sort of potential traction alopecia. If you already have naturally thin hair and you're having to like slick it back every day, as soon as you get home from work, get the bun out of your hair, do like some sort of scalp treatment. You don't have to do that every single day, but on your wash days do some sort of scalp treatment. I love our pre-wash scalp oil. It has Turmeric which is decongesting for any of the like, for just the sweat, sebum oil that you're getting in the build up. So turmeric is gonna decongest; rosemary increases blood flow. Sorry, Trace, I'm freaking out...Um whenever I talk about hair stuff.

TRACE LYSETTE // That's okay! I love it!

JVN // The tumeric, the rosemary and then also it has neem oil which has been used in Ayurvedic, Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years to heal burns, skin, plants. It's just like a really beautiful healing oil. And then it also has bisabolol which comes from chamomile, which is really powerfully anti-breakage. So if your hair is like fine and you're putting it in a tight bun every day, we don't want it to break and we don't want it to become fragile. So, a scalp treatment that you run through your ends is gonna be very helpful—like our pre-wash scalp oil—or there's other ones too. So I look out for that, do that on your wash days. And then I would say on the days when you're not washing your hair, I would not get it wet. Uh, you don't need to like wet it and dry it if you're not washing it. But I think for you because of the way that like, I think military people have to like wear the hair all slicked straight back, I would say like brush it and brush it down so that it's not all back. So that like you don't have that much tension on your hairlines.

TRACE LYSETTE // And get a silk pillowcase, a silk pillowcase.

JVN // Yessssss! Yes, Trace! And also when you sleep don't put tension on your hairline and just do silk scrunchies. And when you sleep like no tension on your hairline, especially because you're having to wear it so tense to work. Okay, Trace it's our final segment. It's kind of, well, actually the first question isn't rapid fire, but then after that, it becomes rapid fire. So we know that beauty never sleeps but we do! We get tired and I need my sleep and uh I do have like an un-getting ready with me routine that I typically do. But we want to know yours. Like let's say, let's say you went out, let's say there was there... glam happened. What happens when you get home before bed?

TRACE LYSETTE // So I will slather on some kind of oil like uh Mario Badescu makes a good one that you can put in, you know, all over. Or I'll do like a double cleanse like like a melt. I think Fenty has one.

JVN // Like Ponds?

TRACE LYSETTE // Yea, or like a cold, like Ponds cold cream. I have that Ponds cold cream. Sometimes I'll do that.

JVN // I use that to take off my eye makeup. The Ponds; it's like it's old school...

TRACE LYSETTE // Yea I love, I love to start with an oil or a cold cream or a melt like a double cleanse situation. Just mess it all up. You look crazy and then I'll just reach for like a Mac wipe and just wipe that shit off. Give it a splash and then I'll do like a night cream, a good, night cream and that's it. Or sometimes a little Vaseline or like, you know, balm around the eyes just so that that's nice and plump in the morning. Laneige makes a good lip mask.

JVN // I love that sleeping lip mask. Yeah, I love that. I've used that before.

TRACE LYSETTE // Yes!

JVN // Have you seen that TikTok thing or it might be on IG too of it's like, it's like, it's like a stitch video and she's like, "If you're not getting home from the club and like showering and doing your skin care, like, what are you doing?" And then like the stitch video comes in and this lady is just like, arrrr on like this like hamburger that she just passes out. It's so funny.

TRACE LYSETTE // Ok, I do do that sometimes too. Sometimes that's happening before the skincare. And let's be honest, sometimes I don't always do the skincare before bed or

sometimes I just go to bed and I wake up looking crazy or if I'm pulling some trade or have a man over something, the makeup is staying on honey.

JVN // Ahhh! So I will say, I got really into like eye makeup in the last year. My friend Alok has been saying to me like, "Why don't you wear eye color?" And I also had like I had a drag queen phase when I was like 17, 18 and then I was a makeup artist when I very first started doing hair and I kind of just...when you go to hair school like you do a whole makeup like like I just I did all the colors on my face. I did, I I did that when I was like in my late teens and early twenties. So as an adult and especially being on camera, I was more of just like I want like my daily look and I just want to know what that is. I wasn't trying to like, learn how to do extra things. And Alok was like, "I wanna see you use some color like what the fuck? Like what gives: you're this expressive fashionable person but then you won't put any color on your face. Like, what is that about?" And so then I finally, after a couple of years, I was like, "I do want to start doing colors," so now I got like, I just got, I don't know where I put it, but I got like palettes on palettes on palettes. I've been really experimenting with my, just with my makeup game. But then y'all: truth in moment, I am a human and I clean my brushes once a week, but I got a fucking styte on my, I got like that thing in my eye like two weeks ago, it was so painful.

TRACE LYSETTE // I got a styte, too, this year! It was the worst.

JVN // I think some of it's like not washing the face all the way. And I will say I feel like there have been nights where I just get really tired. And so and I mean, not like when I get home from the thing, I may not go wash my face right away. I like wait till before bed because I got to take my HIV pill anyway. But now my new thing is—I've really been on this for like the last month—don't wait till bedtime, like, it when I'm done with dinner or like, like 8 o'clock or so, because I usually just, like, pass out naturally at, like, 9 or 9:30 unless I'm, like, on tour or working. Like, I just wash my face when I get home now and I do my skin care when I get home. So I'm not waiting later when I'm, like, passed out and I have noticed that's really helped.

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, well, I realized I'm gonna stop doing the up under the lash line liner, pencil situation. It's just not worth it to me

JVN // But I like the water line!

TRACE LYSETTE // I know but I I don't know if it's worth it. I mean...

JVN // Yeah, I literally have like a white head on mine like literally like right now it's disgusting. I gotta like do a warm soak which I was told that warm soaks are great and I do notice that they like really relieves the pressure and it makes it heal faster. Okay, Trace, what is your go-to budget beauty recommendation?

TRACE LYSETTE // Budget beauty recommendation: I mean I love drugstore products. I love L'Oreal and that's probably my go to with moisturizer and skincare and you know, Revitalift Cleanser and Age-Perfect Moisturizer with 25 SPF and I love just drugstore beauty. I'm an around-the-way bitch.

JVN // No, it's good though. And some of it's like really good. I got to say it's true. What's your favorite splurge recommendation? Like what is something that you'll just get a little coinsy for? We love it.

TRACE LYSETTE // Oh, Chanel foundation: I will get splurgy for that. Or some Fenty like—well, they're kind of mid-level, I guess—but like empty color or palettes. You know, I will do that. Joanna Vargas exfoliator. I like, I like the JVN shampoo but, but I don't have to pay for that, because sometimes it just comes for free.

JVN // But I love that you use it. I love that you love it. What is your like, must keep in-stock recommendation? Like you've never run out of it because you always have two.

TRACE LYSETTE // I love this L'Oreal moisturizer: the Age Perfect one that Viola Davis is always in commercials for. But I also love you...have you heard of Native? Like deodorant and body wash? I live for that company. It's just feel, it just feels so like bare bones and pure and...

JVN // I fuck with their body wash hard.

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, the powder and cotton body wash, or the cotton and lily deodorant smells like heaven on earth. So I'll do that with like Vaseline Intensive Care Cocoa Butter Lotion; the the cocoa butter scented one in the brown bottle. That combination; the trade will be licking you from head to toe, okay? And a little and don't, don't let you slide into a little bit of Creed perfume or some Versace Bright Crystal on top of that. They will be salivating honey; treating you like the goddess you are!

JVN // Uh—Trace, I also think also re: the skincare campaign from earlier. If I was a buyer and I saw you using fucking L'Oreal Age Perfect and then talking about it in a podcast, I would be knocking your agents door down so fucking hard with 2 feet. Like just uh, "Like where's the contract?" You know what I'm saying? Okay, slaying seconds or storage, slaying: a new product that you're obsessed with right now, and it can totally be something that you've already said.

TRACE LYSETTE // Oh, this Diamond Bomb from Fenty the Rose Rave Diamond Bomb. It's like, I don't know how to describe it. It's this reflective kind of creamy powder that I put on my cheekbones. I put on my collarbone. I put on my titties. I put it on my eyelids. I put it down the center of my nose to contour. It is pinky and rosy and lux and I don't know, I'm in love with the packaging too. So, yeah, I'm, I'm all about that.

JVN // That's pretty! Okay, we love that. For seconds: what's a product that deserves a comeback? It's like not fierce these days, but it was once upon a time you: want it back.

TRACE LYSETTE // Oh my goodness. There was a Paula Dorf cream blush called Disco that I used to buy, over 20 years ago. I still have one from 20 years ago. Side note: don't use for makeup from 20 years ago. Don't be like me. But I have a little bit left in the pot and sometimes I use that. And it's like buttery, bronzy kind of like salve that I have not found anywhere else.

JVN // Come back, Jack, come back, where there's enough room on the board, like...

TRACE LYSETTE // Yes! Paula Dorf Disco Cream.

JVN // Come on, Paula. Okay, so we got that. Okay, storage: what's something that's, uh, had its day in the sun? You don't want to see any more beauty-wise, you're over it. It's storage, put it away.

TRACE LYSETTE // In storage: ah, people might drag me for this. No pun intended. But I'm kind of over all of the drag contouring and the over-contouring and the...it's like, I don't know, I just feel like sometimes it's played out, but to each their own. So I always want people to be unique and do what's right for them. But sometimes I think, sometimes I think the over-contouring and the over-baking with all of the powder; it does a disservice to what's actually going on on your, like under there, like your natural bone structure and your face. And some people be like, oh, well, some people might be like, "Well, that's easy for you to say," but like, I don't know, I think that skin sometimes can be the priority and when you, when you, when you over bake the skin, like it can just look chalky on the cheekbones

and it's not cute. I know it's a part of drag culture. Like I used to do it when I was a showgirl in my teens. But I think sometimes there's a better way.

JVN // I also think it's like, if you need that to feel, like, confident enough to, like, leave the house, then I think it's like, that's, I feel like, so not, I don't think you're gonna know no one's gonna drag you for that. But it's like, I like a, a world where you can do all of it but it like you don't have to do that to feel pretty.

TRACE LYSETTE // Yeah, I'm not saying don't contour if you want to contour but contour the right way, just don't... I don't want to see. I don't wanna see chalky white cheekbones anymore.

JVN // Centerfold beauty moment: what's an iconic look that inspires you to this day? I loved your ballroom example earlier. But it can be that, can be any anything.

TRACE LYSETTE // An iconic look that inspires me to this day. Oooof, I would say hmmm...and you could probably find the clip of this, the iconic Angine Mugler look when she pumps out from the back of the runway in the ball, in the ballroom scene. Uh, there's a clip of her coming from down from the balcony; she wasn't gonna walk face and they're like Angine are you coming girl? Are you coming? And she hits the floor, right as uh Diana Ross's song, "Love Hangover," hits the beat and she pumps on beat and she's in this white short—I think it's a halter white dress—and her hair is just long and all one length and it's like bouncing and she's tossing it and she's giving you face and body. It's effortless femme queen bombshell; effortless transsexual bombshell. And I think about that look a lot.

JVN // What's a recent beauty moment that stopped you in your tracks?

TRACE LYSETTE // Salma Hayek stops me in my tracks. I don't know, I love her Instagram. I love that she's still in a...you know, in her bathing suit bearing her bombshell body all the time, unapologetically in her 50s. Same thing with J-Lo. I think those women in their 50s and 60s and even older like when they are not afraid to still be sexy: that stops me in my tracks.

JVN // Hmmm. What's a beauty look we've yet to see but absolutely need. I already know what mine is, which is Trace Lysette as the face of L'Oreal. I never know...if it's Eva Longoria, I love her so much, but I'm so ready for like the national commercial and I don't want it shared with 12 people. No, I love a 12 person shared campaign. That's great, I love that. But I want a solo, primary Trace Lysette, fucking...that's what I want. That's what I want. And I'm asking myself the question!

TRACE LYSETTE // I love you! I'm going to second that. I mean, listen, I think I just, I, I would love for the bombshell to come back like the unapologetic, bombshell look. And it would be dope if they accepted transsexual women into that as well. I think sometimes—and this is a really complicated topic—but I think sometimes when I've been up for a campaign or something and they want somebody trans, they sometimes don't want someone as binary or as bombshell or as sexy. And because to the general audience who may not know me, they might just be like, well, "Who is this white bitch with this body? Like we don't, I don't know what's going on there. Like how is that trans representation?" You know, because I've been told, "You don't look trans enough" or, "We can't, we're looking for someone who quote unquote looks trans," and that is a hard pill to swallow sometimes because I'm like, well, my experience is very trans and I didn't always look, you know, this whatever. So that's frustrating to me because it's almost like, don't you get that me being a trans woman looking like this is, is, is provocative as fuck. Not only for straight men who have to then digest and break down why they may feel whatever they feel when they look at a transsexual woman like me. But because it is also, it is also so unapologetic hyper-femininity, whatever, you know, sexiness that to me is also a part of feminism. It

should be. And so it raises a lot of questions beyond, I guess the cover of the book. Like, I think a lot of times we're reduced to the cover of whatever it is... like the shell of who we are. So, yeah, I would like to, I would like to see bombshell femme queens marketed more; unapologetic in the way that we are presented to the world. I don't think that...I think sometimes I miss out on opportunities because of the way that I present, or the way that I've kind of like, journeyed into my womanhood.

JVN // Well, for me, it's been such an honor to like, get to witness you and I know that you were like, only on an ascent. Your career is, it's only getting bigger. But I think it's like, it's, I hope you have your seatbelt on for like the like, it, it's not even like a... you need like that body thing because you're gonna be on like the spaceship that never blows up, honey. It's just, it's just going and it's gonna keep going and I, and that, that's happening for you and I love you and I've just, I just love you and I'm so proud of you and I just...

TRACE LYSETTE // I love you too. Thank you! I hope you're right.

JVN // I love you so much. I think, I think I am, I think I, I know I am. It's weird. I think I might get kicked out of here for being so right. Also, so I, because I am all up on your 'Gram. I've been following the 'Gram for years. Cannot recommend it enough. Let's follow along on the Instagram. We'll include that link on this episode description and *Monica*: watch it now, see it now, share it now, talk to everybody about it now because it does have its SAG-AFTRA waiver. So...

TRACE LYSETTE // Listen, uh we gotta promote as much as we can. We're up against, you know, larger projects that have a lot of money behind them. And um and so yeah, we are allowed to talk about *Monica*. We should celebrate it. It is historic. The, the moment at Venice was historic. Uh, it was a first and we want more stories that center trans people across the gender spectrum. And I think we gotta champion, the ones that get a foot in the door, the ones like this, we got; we need, you know, we need those few projects that do kind of eek in to do well, so that we can have more, more say so, so we can get behind these annoying gates of Hollywood.

JVN // Trace Lysette: I love you so much. Thank you for coming on *Pretty Curious*. Thank you for sharing yourself with us. We love you so much and we cannot wait to talk to you again. Thank you for coming on *Pretty Curious*.

TRACE LYSETTE // I love you, honey. Thanks for having me.