Pretty Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Keeks Reid

JVN: Hey, curious people. Welcome to Pretty Curious, our podcast on all things beauty. I'm Jonathan Van Ness, and my Phoebe raspy voice came out. It's a Monday morning and we're here and thriving. I love to see it this week. We're talking to the contributing beauty director of cosmopolitan UK, Keeks Reed, we're talking all things beauty industry, micro trends and where she thinks the industry is headed. And also she's just an incredible person, incredible writer. I love her story. I love that I've gotten to meet her and I'm excited to get to talk with her. But before we get to our conversation with her, it's time to get ready with me.

You guys, it's giving Vegas. It is so dry here. Even when it's not super hot, it's very dry. And it's been really eye opening for me with JVN Hair because I'm seeing, I'm seeing what people's hair goes through in kind of a different way and a different climate. And it's been really kind of exciting for me. We're working on a bunch of different formulas at JVN Hair. Um But being in this different climate has just got me just per with ideas um as far as the hair care goes, but I am relying heavily on our Nurture Mask. Uh It is coming in really handy in our Pre-Wash Scalp Oil.

And you guys, you know, we love some good Lush in this house. So I got two of those refrigerator masks. I got um which I can't remember the names of and I'll have to share it on @CuriousWithJVN on our stories. Um If you're vibing it, but I got two masks, I'll tell you how those go. I love their little refrigerated masks. It's so fucking nice. I got the best shit from Lush. The description is wrap yourself in a comforting embrace of this limited edition shower gel. It's the same scent as the Butterball bath bomb. It's got organic cocoa butter and literally my skin from using just the body wash with no moisturizer afterwards. Felt so good because I went to Lush to get body moisturizer because my body's been all dry. Um But it just, I love the scent. It's got it oil. Um I just love Lush. Um They're so good. Oh, I'm going to sneeze. Oh no, I'm not. Never mind.

Now, let's get into our listener question. So this, oh I love this. So this person says, "I loved your episode with Nayamka, the L.A. BeautyOlogist last week, Curious about specifically Gen X skin care. Any advice for that sweet spot between baby boomers and millennials?" So let's Google, Gen X age range, Gen X age range... Um ok, so that's going to be like 44 to 59. Beautiful age box. So I think for these people, uh it's really, it's always about sun care or, you know, SPF and, and protecting your skin from the sun, but it's even more so as we get into, as we get older, so the older we get, it becomes even more important. So we're definitely gonna want to lean heavily on to or SPF. You're gonna want to make sure that you have SPS to take with you throughout the day to reapply whether that's like a powder or you actually have your sunscreen with you. But I think skincare based SPS are really important. You know, I'm a Summy Fridays, girly, a lot of dermatologists have their own, you know, things that they like, but making sure they have some great skincare ingredients in there. Um With your SPF is really nice. Retinol is gonna be really good for your Gen Xers. It's gonna be great for fine lines. Um If you do use retinols in a place that is really just sun heavy, making sure again that you're really SPF in your life away the next day, don't wear retinols in the morning, put them on at night. Then you're gonna want to wash your face before your day skin care and then obviously really heavy on your SPF and like visors. Um and then also I would say um I love Jet Lag by Summer Fridays too, but a more like thick occlusive mask to just settle the skin. Um, oh, I got that oat one from lush now, speaking of, but just something
like that's really like calming and soothing to the skin that's gonna deeply hydrate it and keep the moisture in um that you have is gonna be really good. And then I think retinols start a little work your way up. I really like Katherine Hirons, Skin Rocks. Retinols are really nice. Um And, but I mean, there's a lot of different retinols. There's also, you know, nice ones from the drugstore. Oh, also my aesthetician yesterday did say vitamin C for desert and sorry, I'm gonna get like a stand alone vitamin C because she did say it's nice to put on a loan and it's really good for this sort of climate. So uh Gen X or Queen, I'm gonna say Retinol really happy, get into your SPF. And also let's fuck with some um some vitamin C to kind of brighten it up. So I want to go on this question and we love Vegas.

But now it's time for us to get to our conversation with Keeks. Keeks Reid started her career in beauty journalism in 2013 as an editorial assistant for Black Hair magazine. She worked her way up to acting editor of Black Hair at just 23 years old now. She is the contributing beauty director of Cosmopolitan UK and works with a range of companies from consumer and trade magazines and websites to beauty brands and salons. Keeks. Welcome to Pretty Curious. How are you?

KEEKS REID: Good. My love. Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to chat with you.

JVN: I'm so excited to talk with you. I can't stand it but can I just say I really wanna skip everything to right now. I'm minding my own business on Instagram like a month ago or something. And I'd already been, I'd already like shortlisted you to, to talk to you about beauty and pretty curious because we got to meet through JVN Hair like years ago and we spent like, because we've been together twice, three times, twice, three, three, I can remember.

KEEKS REID: No, I think it's twice.

JVN: It's twice. It's twice. Yeah, we, yeah, we go way back. Um So sorry. So I follow you and I'm minding my own business and then I see you make this post where it's like, I'm going to hair school and then I was like, oh my God, that is really all I want to talk about because I mean, I want to talk about your career as well, obviously, like, because it's storied and it's incredible, but I just love someone going to her school later. I love someone who's like kind of been like hairdresser adjacent. But now you're like, Honey, I'm going behind the chair. I also think you're going to be the most incredible hairstylist and I just am obsessed with this plot twisting journey for you. So, and also, isn't, is it true because like in, in England and in Europe, don't you have to go to hair school for like, way longer than what we do?

KEEKS REID: So I don't really understand the nuances between like how it changes from country to country. But I know we don't have to go to cosmetology school, but you have things like an NBQ qualification that you have to get and you have to move up via that qualification to be from like a apprentice to a senior stylist. So you can't call yourself a senior stylist till you've done that. But then there's also so many like Afro hairdressers for instance, that learn just like at home and on their pairs and then that's just how they've learned and they've gone to school later. So I think you can do it in so many different ways. But yeah, I've chosen to start at 32.

JVN: So and so does that mean that you're like apprenticing at a salon or is there like cosmo schools in the United Kingdom? So
KEEKS REID: I'm currently learning with Redken, the color brand. Um I'm learning my color through them but mainly theory and then a bit of practical. But really what I want to do is cutting. So I'm going to be learning cutting at Harry salon, which is based on the King's Road, very posh for.

JVN: So you'll just go like, like every day, like three days, two days.

KEEKS REID: It's gonna be once a week because I've still got to earn money. Like I was still feed myself. So it's gonna be once a week. So it's going to probably take me longer. But I'm still at the moment because the reason I started this journey is because I wanted to represent hairdressing in the best way possible when I speak about it on television, when I write about it. And I've been doing that for a decade. But the only way that I feel like I can improve that is actually touching the hair, trying to do it and seeing firsthand how hard it can be because I know it can be hard. But I want to like, I want to feel it. So um I just want, I'm do, I initially started this because I wanted to become a better journalist. But now I'm like, well, it would be silly to just learn it and not, it's like doing your driving practical test and not ever doing a like a proper test and qualifying. So I do think I want to qualify now, which is exciting.

JVN: So you're minding your own business and you're like, I want to become a beauty journalist.

KEEKS REID: Yes. So I, to be honest, I feel like beauty journalists didn't really have the pizza and the clout that it has. Now, when I was younger I didn't really want to be a beauty journalist. I just knew I wanted to be a writer for a cool magazine, but beauty was such a little sister of fashion that it didn't, I didn't even know that you could do that. So I originally wanted to be either like a celebrity interviewer in the UK. There was these, uh, newspaper, like, magazine journalists called 3 a.m. Girls and they'd go to parties and, like, get wrecked with celebrities and then come back and talk about the gossip, like the original gossip girl. And I don't know why I thought, oh, I might be good at that because I really don't ever go out and party. But I was like, that sounds fun. So I started, uh, my first, uh, proper internship was at a newspaper on the features desk and it was while I was there, uh, the intern at the time, Zoe, who's now one of my closest friends and she's now the head of beauty and lifestyle at this, uh, paper was in the beauty cupboard as a beauty intern. And I was like, oh, like I can come and help you. I finish my task and then I was like, oh my God, you can touch all these, you can take these products home. You can, you can just, you, you can take whatever you want. She was like, yeah, just take it. We're just gonna, like, give it away. Otherwise I was like, ok, I'm obsessed and that's how I kind of grew into, like, my love of beauty and understood that that was like a proper role within the magazines, um, within the magazine world. And, yeah, that's, that's how my little journey began.

JVN: How did you, like, first get into it? Like, get into like working with beauty companies and magazines.

KEEKS REID: I interned on and off throughout my time at uni because I went to university in London and I'm born and bred in London. So I live with my parents and interned through there. So I didn't have to intern too much after uni before getting a job. But I applied for a lot of jobs within media. And the only one that got back to me was black hair, which was the best, most saving grace because it meant that I kind of went into the industry and I didn't feel uh like othered, I did feel different because I was writing to black women for black women.
Um and I got that job before I graduated. So I finished UNI in May 2013 and my parents there, I love them. They're amazing. They're so supportive, but they were like, you can't intern for free for more than a year because that's just being unemployed. So if you don't get a job within a year, you have to go to back to school and do your PG CE which is to become a teacher. And I was like, I, I love teachers. They're amazing, but I would not be good at it. I'm not patient enough.

**JVN:** So I was like, I don't want that acronym. I don't want to do that.

**KEEKS REID:** I was like, that's not, I'm not going to be good at that. I'm not going to enjoy it. So, yeah, I, I was very much like applying for every single job and this job at black hair came up and I got it in the October. So from May to the October, I was looking for jobs and then got that in October and I graduated in the November. So I technically graduated after I started my first job um which was, yeah, it was really fun. It was a great introduction to the industry because like I said, I just felt just so normal and never othered or different um or marginalized at all because I, my editor was called Keisha. That's where keeps comes from because I couldn't be called Akeesha and Keisha because it was so confusing because I was her sister. So I was like, well my friends call me cakes and then that just stuck and now everyone calls me Keeks.

**JVN:** So one thing I hear, one thing I hear about that story is really important is that like you are applying for things you said from May to October and then one, only one of the places that you're applying for got back to, that's giving me like resilience. And I feel like a lot of people, like, when they don't hear back or if they, like, either don't hear back or if they hear a no, then they're like, this isn't for me. And I feel like when I hear successful people's stories, it's like knowing that you have to keep going, like, and knowing that you'll, like, find your, like, you'll find the opportunity you're meant to find, but you won't find it if you stop looking.

**KEEKS REID:** I know. Thank you. And I do appreciate that. I do think I'm quite resilient and I think you have to be in this industry and especially nowadays with social media, you have to be so resilient. But I am, I really do have my family to thank for that because they, they build strong women and I wasn't going to leave this industry. I wasn't going to go and do my PG CS PG ce. I just wasn't going to do that. I was going to be a journalist. So it's like someone's going to hire me.

**JVN:** Do you ever need a thick skin to be on social media? That is so true. Um Right now these fucking people since 2013, how do you think social media has changed the beauty industry and just changed us? Like are we meaner?

**KEEKS REID:** I feel like we are, I think that social media gives us a platform and I don't engage in it, but I think it gives people a platform to say things to people that they would absolutely never say to their face ever. And I'm like, I'm from Southeast London. Like I've never been spoken to the way that I get spoken to sometimes on social media. So I think that it's changed us for the worst in so many ways. But it has opened up so many doors for people and given opportunities to meet people and get jobs and move countries in the way that you never would have. When I was younger. Like when I graduated in 2013, there was the job of social media manager didn't really even exist for most magazines. Like people were just mucking in. There was no tiktok, there was barely Snapchat, there's just Facebook and Twitter and Instagram, but that was just for pictures. It just didn't exist in a way that it does now and now I feel like it's created so many jobs and created a uh you know, a new, it's
a new, a new media. It's, it's where people turn to now for things. People don't even Google it ma n said she doesn't Google anymore. She just typed in on tiktok.

JVN: I've been doing that too. Does that mean I'm young? I was going to ask you about like micro trends and, and social. But I want to go like, well, first of all, I do want to ask about that, but I want to go a little deeper. First of all, you tell us like what a micro trend is.

KEEKS REID: So micro trend are these trends that you see crop up that are normally hashtag able. So it will be like tomato girl, makeup, strawberry girl, makeup latte, makeup mob wife. And it's something that's easily replicated when you buy specific products or like it's got a very uh formulaic way of creating the trend. Whereas trends, I really do feel like a geriatric when I talk like this, like trends back in my day. But trends that I was used to growing up and then moving into when I first started in this uh industry, they would be created, they'd be curated backstage or created backstage. Sorry. And um we would curate them as assistants because we would have our little dictaphone and go up to the makeup person and the nail person and ask them where they got their inspiration from. And then we would say, oh, we saw that at the Burberry Show, we saw that, we saw that last week, we saw that, you know, in Paris, we put those together and it might be something as like generic as glass skin, but at least they were, they were being pulled from different reference points. We would make a page about it, talk about where the inspiration came from. The consumer would read that and we would, you know, talk about products that you can use, but you would then use that as inspiration as opposed to directly replicating it. So that's where I feel like micro trends differ from trends because they are directly replicated. It's like if you don't use these products, you're not, you're not doing that trend. If you're not doing freckles with the freck pen, you're not doing strawberry girl makeup, which I think has mad us.

JVN: I, I still see that and I also feel like it's just made us like, not as resourceful and independent because like a lot of times I feel like I'll say like, I'll do like a video about like, you know, doing my curls or something. I always try to give people the information and the tools so they can like, take that info, take those tools and then make it work for themselves versus like do A to Z because there's so much like uniqueness onto that person, but it's like no one not knowing. I don't make those generalizations, but a lot of people don't have that attention and to be able to like, pull the stuff out that will work for them.

KEEKS REID: And it's not, I feel like it's just not their fault because back in my day, back in my day, back in our day, we didn't, I, we had to ask Jeeves like I couldn't just go on tiktok and ask about something or go on Google and Google my homework. Like I had to ask Jeeves or ask my mom or dad or look in an encyclopedia

JVN: Or at least ask your hairdresser who probably knew if it was a beauty thing. It was like you would at least have to ask someone who like has more experience than some Rando on the and it wasn't just immediately available to you.

KEEKS REID: So that's why, I mean, information wasn't as immediately available. So therefore we had to be more resourceful. So we would look at something and think, oh, I like that. I'm going to try and do that with this thing. Whereas it's like they need to know the exact thing and that's because they, people are used to that now and it's not just young people, we're all becoming more used to it, right? Because everything's just immediately available to us
JVN: As a beauty broadcaster, as a beauty journalist. Oh, how do you decide, like, what stories to pitch or like when people pitch you stories? How do you know as a director? Like, yes, that's interest. I don't think that that's interest or like, how do you decide that?

KEEKS REID: So, as a writer, um I'm really lucky now that I can be more discerning with what I pitch. And that's like the best thing that's come from the experience that I've gained is that I'm now trusted with like bigger pieces. I don't have to like- come up with 10 pitches because I need to make money this week. Like it's, it's nice that I can be a bit more discerning now. So I definitely pitch more like human interest stories with beauty. So uh first person things or like things of my childhood that's reflected in me now or like my mom's influence and beauty, like those kind of human interest stories and at cosmo, because so much of the beauty budget was used on me as a contributor, which was amazing because they loved working with me. Um They didn't have as many new voices in beauty. So then when I was brought on full time and that budget was freed up. I was really interested in getting as many voices that we hadn't heard from before. I personally love first person pieces that I think it's the way that traditional media kind of bridges with new media. Because if you think about the things that we're watching on what I know I'm watching and that's on my algorithm. It's like story time and you know, I tried this and this is what I thought and I love those stories and that's getting those different points of view. And I wanted to bring that to cosmo but not in a not to shade any other media because I consume it as well. But I didn't want it to be like only I tried this and this is what I thought I wanted it to be more interesting. We had like someone talking about their hair loss, we had someone talking about laser for uh and sorry, chemical pills for the, treating their acne and those stories that they've only done and only they can write about. That's what I wanted to, to commission. That's cool.

JVN: What, what do you, um, from like the beginning of your career to now? What, what frustrates you about the beauty industry? And what are you excited for, for the future of the beauty industry?

KEEKS REID: That's a really good question. What frustrates me. Um, and it will continue to is the pay if I'm being honest. And because it prohibits so many people from getting into the industry, it's so like elitist, it just is. And I don't come from a really rich family. I don't come from a, you know, I had a really lovely, very like middle class upbringing, but I, I'm lucky because I lived in London so I could work for free for ages. But I know people that have lived elsewhere in the UK that haven't been able to come down and do free internships or come down and only earn like in this day and age, like £20,000. And that's just their salary as like an editor, like assistant editor and stuff. Like it's really quite bad. So I think for me it's the pay. But um what I'm excited about, I'm excited about the fact that you don't have to go the traditional route now. I'm excited that there's so many- there was no way in hell that I could have just become of been a freelancer and out of uni back and just made it, I remember from between uh, Black Hair and Hair magazines and my job at Hairdresser's Journal, which is a trade magazine in the, in the UK. Um, which is, yeah, trade hairstyling. I was freelance. But babe, I was unemployed, I was absolutely unemployed. I, I think I maybe had like one project that I worked on. I luckily had some savings. So I did a, a coding course so that I could kind of learn while I wasn't working. But though I just didn't have enough contacts, I didn't network enough there. I just didn't know how to get in. But now there are so many freelance- I'd say most of my friends in this industry are freelance and they haven't spent that much time on a brand and that's so incredible that you can become so successful. Now
without needing a Vogue or an Elle or a Cosmo while they're still relevant, you can do it without them as well, which I think is pretty cool.

JVN: Are you ready? Are you ready for our rapid fire? Our rapid fire round.

KEEKS REID: Yes, I am rapid fire.

JVN: What's your go to budget beauty recommendation. Budget

KEEKS REID: Budget Beauty?

JVN: I would say under £10


JVN: I have that - that's what I take my makeup off with- Splurge Recommendation Beauty or otherwise it could be a Birkin, it could be like a great, it could be a great lash, the great mascara anything?

KEEKS REID: Ok, I've got two things. Can I do two things?

JVN: Yes!

KEEKS REID: One is a product. It's skin suit. It's the best fit in the whole world. It's like 100 and 60 something pounds. It's ridiculous. But I would buy it every single month because it's what makes my skin glow. It's the best Vitamin C I've ever used. And then this is rapid fire. I'm talking really fast. Tell me to slow down if you need it so good. Um And then I always splurge on like health stuff. So for me, I would like if I'm in pain or if I'm like stressed, I would get a massage. I would get acupuncture. I'd get lymphatic drainage. I would get cupping like I don't care. I splurge on, on anything, especially like-

JVN: What's been your biggest nicest splurge spa like body work like wellness thing? Like your favorites thing like that you've ever done?

KEEKS REID: My favorite appointment is always with a practitioner called Ada O. She is insane. Like she's so amazing the way that she reads your body. She reads your tongue. Um And luckily like, I've always managed to do it via work. So, but I will 100% pay to see her like I, I love her, she reads your tongue and then she will tell me like, you know, "you've got like not enough iron." She told me once, which could have been quite depressing. But I was like, it's fine now. But she was like, if you want to have a baby, you could not, your body is too tired. Ok? You need to slow down and we need to do some work around your room. And you, I was like, ok, cool. Good thing I didn't want a baby, but she's great like that. Like, she can really read your energy, your tongue, your insides. So I love Eastern and Western medicine working together. Like to me that's like proper symbiosis. That's where I'm like in my calm state.

JVN: I love that hybrid. That's beautiful. What's a product you never leave home without?

KEEKS REID: Do you know what? I think it would be lip products? So a brown lip liner and like Aquafor if I had to be like basic.

JVN: I love that. It's also like simple, not basic. Like that's gorgeous, like simple and classy. Um OK. What's like your favorite vintage beauty look? It could have been from a movie, a
fashion show, a magazine just like like I always think like of Renee Russo's hair from the Thomas Crown Affair. Like- floaty billowy gorgeous.

KEEKS REID: OK. I think probably that the look that instantly comes to my head is uh Dionne from Clueless that and that is vintage now, right? That's like 30 years ago.

JVN: And she hadn't turned out to be a raging but she still had great style.

KEEKS REID: - but as the character, let's not think about, is it Stacy Dash?

JVN: And she hadnt turned out to be a raging but she still had great style.

KEEKS REID: - but as the character, let's not think about, is it Stacy Dash?

JVN: And she hadnt turned out to be a raging but she still had great style.

KEEKS REID: believe in. Who don't-

JVN: believe in. Yeah. Don't believe what people say because because he's d do we had folks keep building up impossible hopes, impossible things. No, I was trying to get seeing. I'm so upset. Ok. That's all. Would you have another one?

KEEKS REID: Um And probably probably Baz Lehman Romeo and Juliet. Oh,


KEEKS REID: I literally tried this this week. Major actually. Really good

JVN: Road pineapple cleanser.

KEEKS REID: Ok. Can I, I don't, I don't have a quick answer to this. I'm sorry. It's good. It's a really good cleanser. Why does it not smell of pineapple? I, I get it. Why it doesn't. But how disappointing. Why are you gonna call something pineapple? And it just is so plain.

JVN: It's giving like pineapple enzyme.

KEEKS REID: Which is exactly what it is, but it's also um it's the color of pineapple So everything is there. So it's just like something that-

JVN: Maybe she didn't want a super, maybe she just didn't want like a synthetic pineapple smell.

KEEKS REID: I think she should have just taken the pineapple name.

JVN: Oh, it could have been like a fruit enzyme.

KEEKS REID: Just clean.

JVN: Yes. Or like Road Enzyme cleanser or something. Yeah, that makes sense.
KEEKS REID: It's like peptide lip. Like, it's not like she's got all these, like, fruity names for everything.

JVN: What about, what about, what about like a money box? Like your money


JVN: What about, what about a, what about a bright root? Like a bright or like, or like a bright hair color placement?

KEEKS REID: I, I think that's fun. I live in London. You see that all the time in like Shoreditch. I love that.

JVN: What about hair bows?

KEEKS REID: Yeah, I love, I love any experiment in with it. Apart from chunky highlights.

JVN: What about like those feather hair extensions or those tinsel strand extensions?

KEEKS REID: They're coming back, aren't they? It's very 2000scoded. Um, I think for a party that's major.

JVN: I really hate both and I know this isn't about me but unless you're like seven or 12, um, I am not vibing the feather or sparkle strand pieces.

KEEKS REID: I think for a party it's major. That's why I was very specific. I can't imagine.

JVN: Evene for a party. I just like, I can't believe that you're like, you went to go get that for the like, why didn't like put on some fucking like, glitter on your eyeball that you can wash off? Like I can't believe you're going to walk around this fucking tinsel in yoga and like this little I just can't.

KEEKS REID: Do you know what offends me more babe is. Um those camel lashes, those like really heavy, really like it looks like their eyelids are like doing like five K.

JVN: What about that snail, that snail mucus skincare stuff?

KEEKS REID: Like I have never put that on my face. So it's “Meh” for me, I've seen people love it. So if they like it, I love it.

JVN: That's what I'm here for it. Um Keeks Reid, where can people follow you? Where are you the most active? Is it Instagram? Is it Tik Tok? What's on the horizon for you? When can people get book you for their face framing highlights and haircuts? When is it ready? And where can we stay in touch with you?

KEEKS REID: So I definitely most active on Instagram and then tiktok um is @KeeksReid. All one word. Ke double sk No. What? What?

JVN: Did you forget your name?

KEEKS REID: I forgot how to spell my bloody name. I'll start that again. So you can find me on Instagram and tiktok. Um Keks Reed all one word @KeeksReid. And um you can put, you can put me for hairdressing unless you want to be a guinea pig. So um I'm just at the start of that, but you can book me to do any presenting and panel jobs if you want. Uh I'm definitely available for that. Um And yeah, I'll catch you catch you online.
JVN: Alright, everyone follow because she really is such a great follower and such a great person and I just love getting to talk with you Keks. Thanks so much for coming on. Pretty curious. We love you so much.

KEEKS REID: Thank you so much for having me, my love.

JVN: You've been listening to Pretty Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. You can learn more about this week's guest in the episode, description and follow us on Instagram and TikTok @CuriousWithJVN. Pretty Curious drops every Monday wherever you get your podcasts and make sure to tune in every Wednesday for getting curious. Still can't get enough, honey? You're insatiable! Subscribe to Extra Curious on Apple podcasts for commercial free listening and our subscription only show, AskJVN where we're talking all about sex relationships or really just whatever's on my mind. That week, our theme music is composed by Nathnael McClure. Come on, Nathnael, our editor and engineer is also Nathnael McClure. Yes! Getting Curious is produced by me, Chris McClure and Julia Melfi with production support from Julie Carrillo, Anne Currie and Chad Hall.