

# Shaparak Khorsandi

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My entire career is a result of repressed anger. I don't think I would have been a stand up comic if I wasn't so enraged at what was expected to be my place in the world. 3s Welcome to Women Are Mad, where we invite women to bring their anger into everyday conversation. I'm Selina Saxton, I'm an actress and writer. I'm Jennifer Cox and I'm a psychotherapist. We notice that anger is the one emotion that women aren't allowed to openly express. Meanwhile, everything around us is making us absolutely furious. We're all feeling it. Let's get together to work out what to do with it. 2s Selma. What's made you angry this week? I am angry about grief. I'm not going to go on about my dead dad every week, just to be clear. But where I am in grief has surprised me because I thought I had nailed it four weeks in because I was estranged from my dad, and I talked about it and I cried and I got angry. Good talk. Um, on brand. Um, and I worked out lots of things. What I didn't figure was going to happen was that I was then going to have some kind of big existential fear. So I currently feel pretty scared about lots of things that I haven't been scared about for a long time. And I'm catastrophizing in a way that, again, I haven't for a while, and I can only relate it back to a lot of the dreams I'm having about my dad, about my childhood. Not all bad. Some things like planting vegetables, some really innocuous lovely times too. Um, but I have this big, overwhelming fear and it's pissing me off, so it's like something really existential actually is happening. You're having to confront something. Yes. I'm still piecing it together. I'm still like Miss Marple in it and working out what I think about it all, but I just feel a bit wobbly and a little bit heightened about everything. I think you are more jumpy and wary at the moment. Yes. I'm tetchy. I feel like I've drunk a lot of coffee. That's how you are jittery? Yes, exactly. Am I really? Yeah. You are like you're expecting. Like, what's the next thing? What's going to happen next. Yeah. So I'm braced. Yeah. Bit braced. Exactly. I'm glad that that's not just entirely in my own head. And you've noticed it too. No, I think it's quite real. And I think it's where that the metaphorical, the kind of unconscious stuff does pass through, cross over into real life. Yeah. And also, although he was absent from my life and I chose for him to be absent from my life for many years, he was like some, uh, prop that I had in the back of the cupboard or a walking stick, or like an old overcoat that I could have got out if I really wanted to. And there's no possibility now. So I suppose it's the finality. Yeah. And that you had so little agency ultimately, and deciding where he would be in your mind and in your life. You can make those decisions. He's he's in real terms, not in it, but he's in your head. Yes. And I'm and I'm cross. I am angry that. Oh, no. Yet again, even in death. Hmm. Um, here we go. You're creating or you're helping create. Some kind of big feelings. Um, you know, so the presence of an absent parent is, I would say, sometimes more overwhelming than a very present, everyday parent, even as an adult. Um, yeah. So look, that that's that's where I am. Yeah. Tiny thing to throw in. The tiny thing. Yeah. Um, yeah. Um, tis the season for a new regimen. One way or another. The tweak. The tweak. Mint. Yeah. Yes. Yeah. Mhm. Mhm. So uh yeah. Very confronted by that. And also the reality that for so many women especially, I think this stuff lands really hard. Um, whether it's the demands of this season of the, you know, festive season, but also going into January and kind of being the, um, support for everyone else in the family, that is then undoubtedly having a bit of a rubbish time. So, um, yeah, struck by that. My very dear hippie friend, who literally lives in a teepee, suggested that we, um, no longer abide by. Is it the Gregorian calendar? Um, our calendar. And just do it very differently because she was like, I just try and think of it very differently, as in, you know, the, um, and actually, she has got a point, you know, because these memories that we all have connected to

specific days, um, um, look for some the New Year, Christmas, Easter, whatever can be totally uncomplicated, but but for many of us, I think even our bodies hold so many years of complicated memories about those specific days. Even my birthday does too well. It does. Our brain on anniversaries is fascinating, and I think it indicates how animalistic we are, because we're tapped in more than we ever know into these sensory cues around us that remind our brain. Here we are again. And it's a classic. Prepare yourself almost exactly. So even if you're trying to do things afresh, you're up against that. You're up against, you know, the wiring. We're gonna meet a fantastic woman. Now, uh, let me introduce her. Our guest today manages to deliver searingly truthful observations about the world with a sparkling warmth which always leaves you wanting more. As well as authoring four books, including her latest, scatterbrain, which deftly explores her own neurodiversity. You'll have enjoyed her on everything from I'm a Celebrity to just a minute, please welcome the perfectly unique chaparral course. Andy. Hello! Hello newlywed. Woo! I really love watching guests faces when they hear the introductions. What was your face? What was your face? I was sort of playing with my lips and pulling like my baboon face. 2s Um, shappi. We're going to go straight in and just ask you what makes you angry? What makes me angry is that I was struggling to think of things to talk about that make me angry on this podcast that I listened to and enjoy. And I realized, oh, because I've internalized it all. Yeah, yeah. 4s Correct. I'm fine with everything. 1s Um, yeah, I, I'm angry at a lot of things that I have been working through. Oh, gosh. Take your pick. Um, classism, racism, homophobia. And let's start with romance, please. So angry with how long it's taken me to realize how hoodwinked we all were about what love is. Um, I totally bought into the Cinderella story. That one day there's this one person, and you'll click and that'll be that. And as a result, I. Despite the fact that I grew up well, I came of age in the 90s, so I was in my 20s in the 90s, where we all muddled feminism up with alcoholism, and we were like, having one night stands because men do it. Why can't we? And I would just be like, oh, maybe he is the one for me. Even though we're know my name and we're in a bush and having the Cinderella fantasy and not being not having Sarah Pascoe's book to read 1s about the the chemicals and the biology and how what actually happens to us when we're attracted to someone. The access we have now to the most minimal amount of psychotherapy to learn about, um, you know, our own attachment styles or neediness and what is it that serves us? And constantly thinking, being told that the one thing that will make us happy is finding the one you love. And so, as a consequence, I dated any man who wrote me poetry, stared deep into my eyes, you know, wrote me flipping songs. Don't write me songs. Take the bins out. Ask me how my mom is, you know. Yeah. Ask him. Yeah. Mom is. Yes. This love thing is absolutely true. I do think about it more and more. I have had to explain to every partner that I've had that I don't like Valentine's Day. I don't like standing on a tube platform with a fucking rose in my hand. It's I don't like going to restaurants with lots of other couples. I want this to. The most romantic thing about Valentine's Day is to pretend it's not happening. It's it's the antithesis of romance. Um, for me and I made a decision in because I kept making the wrong decisions with men. I kept muddling romance up with love and then realizing how often I was in a transaction. Um. I will watch you walk on. 1s If you will be. My mother and I found that pattern kept happening and I don't. And I get sad when people go, oh, well, all men want just want a mother. I think that does a disservice to men as well. In January, after my last, um, boyfriend and I broke up, I made a conscious decision to be completely single and celibate for a year. Great. And we're nearly at the end of that year. And I slipped up once, but that was with a good friend, and we never talk about it and count. But it it has really, um, taught me so much about myself and my values. And I never had the confidence to do this before because I was still buying into happiness meant romance, and happiness doesn't mean just that. It also means riding out lonely times. You know, going to parties. I've been to so many Christmas parties just chockablock, you know, kitchens full of happy couples and me on the happy couple. Exactly. Yeah, exactly. And and just thinking you're not the odd one out. You're you and you're here because there's your friends and

and everyone is interesting. And they're not these little units. Um. He said no. Yeah. Well, what I always think as well is that we have to couple up with ourselves. Like that has to be our first relationship, the one that we are happiest in. And then we can go to any number of parties and holidays and whatever it is, where ordinarily you'd think this is for a formal technical couple and realize it's I'm it. I am that couple. Yeah, that's exactly it. And it's taken me so long to get here and understand that and have the courage to lean into that. And now that I have it is so precious and so golden. And I and I look at the way the world is, and it's still telling us all to find the one you love. Um, unless you go on Instagram and say, nice, you know, see a nice lady, say your biggest love should be yourself. Your greatest love should be yourself. The love of your life should be yourself. And that journey. And that's the word. Journey is not one that I'm going to say in a silly voice anymore. I think it's good for you doing a little bit of a journey. Of course it's a journey. Yeah, journey. So where does that leave you happy with with the with the next year in terms of dating, is it something that you're going to think about or, or are you happily single and enjoying what you're journeying towards? Currently I am really happily single. Great, and I am. I do get lonely, but I've found you can get a lot from loneliness when you come out the other side. It's just the thing to get through and you come out the other side. 2s You know, riding through that loneliness. Come out. Coming out the other side. And just being really relieved that I didn't plug it with, um, you know, the first person that said, oh, my gosh, this is Dorothy Parker poem that just reminds me of you. So and then because that's that's not fair on the guys as well. All the girls. That's the other thing. I'm not even like heterosexual, but I've been. So that's another that's another thing I'm angry about. But we'll talk about that later. Why? What? No, I'd like to like to know another thing like about internal like my generation thinks. We think that we Luddites, ravers and all that were the really open minded ones, liberal ones. I went to, you know, so many pride marches and all of this, but my own sexuality I still stifled and I still feel really bashful about and, and I still get a sense of people who've known me. And when I sort of mention it, it sort of stops the conversation a little bit. And that puts me back in my little closet for a bit, and then I sort of creep out, and then I think, oh God, I've left it too late because now it looks like a I'm a, I'm a dilettante lesbian, sort of hitting it like phrase. I love that 1s we, you know, hitting midlife and, um, deciding that, um, well, I can do DIY, so why? And if you are very good at DIY, is she. Yeah. Yeah, I'm all right. The old DIY I've had to be, I've been like on my own and always play the piano rather than put up shelves. So. But isn't this silly then like all of this capability and capacity in you that could have that you could have been enjoying, it was all a bit less than because you felt like the romance wasn't all neatly tied up with a bow. 1s Yeah, yeah, I felt that that was the one thing I wasn't achieving in my life, I was. There was something missing. Yeah. That was I wasn't achieving romance and or love. And the fact is that when I married, um, it was all wrong. It makes me sad when I read my diary from that period and I was so disconnected with myself. But I can read between the lines of 30 something year old me and I just go, oh, darling, you knew he didn't love you. You knew he didn't love you. And and we got married anyway. And we're, you know, we're we're friends now. We have Christmas together. I have a wife in law. His wife. His wife is my wife in law. We've decided. Um, so that's all. That's all good. But it all took a lot of heartache and rebuilding, and it kind of broke my belief in it all, I think, um, I wonder if it was more complicated even than that. And that there was a maybe projection of him not loving you. But what was really difficult to recognize or acknowledge was that you maybe didn't feel that way about him. 1s Yeah. That's what you get when you chat to a psychotherapist. Sorry about that. I could do some clowning. I could do some miming or clowning. No, no. 1s I'm good. Do you know what? I'm just going to leave you with that thought and move you on to the next question anyway, just to be super cruel. When did you last get angry with someone or something? 1s When I 1s r it wasn't really anger, it was really acknowledging and explaining to my dad, who regards himself as a feminist and growing up. I remember my dad and all of his intellectual, um, male friends would sit and drink

vodka and talk about feminism and the importance of feminism while my mum was locked in the kitchen cooking up a storm for the whole. Oh, wow. And I think it was. <sup>1s</sup> I was explaining to my dad that while I was cooking this elaborate Persian meal the other day, which I don't do that often because it's time consuming and realizing just what it takes and remembering all the times when my mom was in the kitchen and my dad would come home and say, oh, I've got a few friends coming to dinner. So that's like in three hours. How many? About 25, right? And my mom would go, and then she would just slave away in the kitchen and she would come out and bring out all these elaborate, beautiful dishes, never 1 or 2, five different dishes. And everyone would praise her. Everyone would praise her. And I said to my dad that now when I look back on mom's cooking, I don't think, oh, she's such an amazing cook. I now think, how flipping sad. How sad that she wasn't spending more time with me and my brother because she was cooking for your guests, and my dad was like, I know, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry, and all of this. He doesn't talk like that. I just completely, uh. Do you know what I mean? That's how I do. My Pakistani mom. It's so funny. My mom's actually terribly, terribly English and speaks very much like this, but I always do what's called Pakistani accent. Honestly, there's there's no one more racist than a child of an immigrant. <sup>2s</sup> I don't know what that was. Apologies. So, <sup>1s</sup> yes, I was very angry. And I said to my dad that now I realized that as a child I resisted it. I would not sit in the kitchen with my mom and learn to cook, and she never pushed me to either. I wanted to be off running off with my brother, and now, like I'm having a dinner party on Tuesday and absolutely freaking out because I've got to cook for five people. So I said to my dad, I feel sad that I couldn't enjoy it as her hobby. I couldn't learn alongside her. And you know, my dad really inspired me as a writer. My mom did not inspire me as a cook because I felt that was a prison. Um, and I feel very angry that I lost out on my mom. I'm impressed that your dad could receive that. <sup>1s</sup> Yeah, I am too. And I'm thankful that I've got him at the age of 80 to still be able to. I'll tell you what, driving to Costco has really healed a lot between my dad and I because he's a bit he it's hard to pin him down for a conversation, but driving to Costco, um, has meant that we, um, have these long form chats, and he's really open and receptive to all of that. And why I don't like him saying ladylike. And he's like, what's wrong with saying someone's a lady? Like I said, but dad, what does it mean? Because you never call me. He never calls. He loves me. He's so proud of me. He never calls me ladylike. And it's like I've said to him, it's taken me a long time to understand that your feminism applies to me. But not to every woman. Right? <sup>1s</sup> You know, but I, I love that you have a father who has given me that happy actually being able to have these conversations that loads of people, I think, never manage with their parents that talk. Yeah. Well done. Talking about the things that were done to us by them and and hearing the apologies, hearing the I shouldn't have done that the regret and being able to have this openness. This is so rare. Yeah. I do feel lucky. It's it's not something I take for granted. And also my dad is a poet, so he is his soul is open to the new and to, um, exploration of that. And also, um, Sarah Burrell as a song. Say what you want to say. Just let the words fall out. I've seen that to myself a lot when I have to have a difficult conversation. Oh, I love this. Yeah, this is amazing. Yeah. All out. Um, because I've always found it extremely difficult to let words fall out. I've been really. Oh, my God, you don't come across like that at all. Shabby. So compliance, so compliant. Even like my kids when they were really small and other kids would come round and they would do something naughty in my house, I wouldn't be able to tell them not to do that. And like, even I wasn't even assertive with children, like, um, which is the responsible thing to do. I'd find it so difficult to say. Could you do you mind not smearing your poo on our wall? <sup>3s</sup> Why shappi, that's so interesting? Because that's not how you come across. And that's not your in your performance. That's not who I see on television. I think there's lots of reasons and I, I think it does come down to anger. And I have ADHD. I am ADHD and I've learned a lot about emotional dysregulation. And I think part of it is I don't know how to. I've learned now, I'm learning now, but I was always so worried of losing it. So. And the only people who've ever seen me lose it are people

that I have, you know, my ex-lovers and my immediate, immediate family. Not even my extended family. Um, I was never able to stand up for myself because I didn't know how to do it like a grown up. Um, I would I would be compliant, compliant, and then tantrum. Right. So I didn't learn that middle ground. And I think also because I've never had like. A job, a conventional job where I've had to rub along with other people, go to HR, have a boss, and so in stand up comedy for me was an escape from all that. I don't think it was an accident because I was like, it was too grown up for me. I don't mean, oh, I'm just such a kid. I'm not saying that in a positive way. Um, I didn't learn how to be an adult and talk to another adult. In a way which didn't make me so angry that I either shouted or cried. Wow. Yes. So I think again how with navigating like the world of standup and it's obviously very male dominated. Always has been. How would you <sup>1s</sup> express yourself, express your needs, get them met, like make sure things happen that you wanted. Did could you? No. No. Yeah. No. This whole thing of needs being met is a new concept for me. Because I didn't know I. It's not even. No, it's not. Even though I didn't know what my needs were, I didn't know I had needs, right. <sup>5s</sup> Oh, I love this. Oh. Shopping shelter. What? Oh, I didn't know I had needs and weren't met. I didn't it didn't occur to me to. And that applies to friendships. That applies to everything. <sup>1s</sup> Um, so can we take you back to when you were starting out, you know, as a as a standup, presumably. Yeah. Very male dominated. You're going up on stage and whatever. You in the green room, how how are you functioning amongst your fellow standups? Well, it's funny because I was I was with some standup friends last night and I was telling them and they were like, you never came across like that. And I'm like, yeah, masking is a big thing. I was chronically bulimic as well. So that was, um, a huge fog that I was in. So I was I put so much energy into masking, and I wrote a diary, which I found a big chunk of the other day, from 1998 to 2004. And in my diary, I don't call it anxiety because I didn't have the vernacular. Then I talk about paranoid. I'm so paranoid. I've just left this conversation and and in my diary I'm telling myself everything's okay. People weren't pissed off with you in the car because you said something boring. People weren't, you know, people. You didn't leave the green room and everyone look at each other and go, why is she on the bill? And going into the green room with other male comedians? They were, um, ones that I felt extremely safe with and ones I didn't. So I would just always lurk and I was just mute around the ones I didn't. And unsafe. Meaning what? I just couldn't speak, I couldn't speak, I couldn't join in with their banter. If they talk to me, I froze. But there were some that I always felt really comfortable with and had a giggle with and had a laugh with. And I drank, I drank, I drank and drank and drank. Um, and uh, yeah, yeah, yeah, binge drinking was how I got through it. And it makes me sad when I read my diary, because there's hardly anything about the art of standup in my diary, so I. I don't even believe that I began to apply creativity to my standup in until, like the last sort of few years, really, it was just coping, cope and coping and wanting to be in this world and having a lot of fun too, and getting the adrenaline hit when I smash a gig. But now that smashing the gig isn't what I need to feel like a normal human being, you know? I'm now really absolutely enjoying being a stand up because the anxiety is not there and all that's left is joy and making and the the art of it and the connection. Um. And I've, I've, there's people that I've known in the stand up circuit for like 20 years that only now I've become like friends with because I couldn't connect with myself, let alone anyone else. I, I'm so grateful that you're saying this out loud, because I think so many women in creative professions, I speak as an actor hugely relate to this. You know, I think of myself in the audition room in my 20s, basically cursing and kind of, uh, you know, as I applied was, um, I was always auditioning for doctors, terrorists, wives or. Yeah, good. The best friends, you know, or whatever. Um, it's only now that I fully embrace the process. I can't relate to the stand up, but I think it's the same joy. Or, like, the craft of it. Yeah. Yeah, it's a pure joy, isn't it? It's the flow. It's the flow and it's the joy. And it's taken me a long time to get here. And here's where internalized racism comes into it. Um, but there weren't any many comics of color. Um, it was so normal for people to say, oh, but you're Iranian. That's your

that's your unique selling point. That's your unique selling point. And then you'd you'd be on a TV show and they'd edit out everything you did, apart from the bits where you talked about being Iranian, you gave ideas, and the only ideas they wanted were the ones that you mentioned about your family background, and it was all well intentioned. I'm not sitting on high and saying all of these other people were wrong, but we were all part of a system that put you in a box if you, uh, weren't white. Yes. Um, you know, people that relate to this, I think class also is a huge thing because, yeah, I deliberately spoke posh. Because. Yeah. Did you as well. Because yes. Might be foreign and working class, for God's sake. <sup>2s</sup> So I deliberately spelt posh, despite the fact that, you know, I went to, you know, the school I went to, uh, and all of that, I had a choice. Um, and I chose posh because I thought that will make me more palatable when I say I thought this was so. It was barely conscious. Thoughts? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Of course, of course. Status quo. You just knew on some level you knew it. Absolutely. So all of that kind of stuff. And then so when the millennials came along and started to like visibly angry and talk about this, I was like, oh, guys, guys, I was I'd cocooned myself, don't make me come out, don't make me come out. And and then it was quite painful, actually. Yeah, I do that. They were calling out things that I had been, um, entrenched in, and I was finding it really difficult. To pull my head out of the sand. About a lot of things, um, which I which I do now. You know, and I do. I am much more vocal and what I did if I put it upon myself. Um, a few years ago, I thought, you know, my career is fine. I'm. I'm established. I don't feel like I'm climbing anymore. And I took my puppy and I went to. I made an appointment to see a big wig producer, a real sort of gatekeeper, and I said I had a column in the, um, paper at the time. I said, I want to come and see you with my with my column. His head. And I said, look, in all the years I've been doing stand up, show me the comics of color who have become part of the establishment. So now when I look at the programming and all the young, the newer comedians aren't. Why are they on a conveyor belt? Or are you going to nurture them? Because I want to see people nurtured. I want to see this person. And I showed them examples of this person's got a show, but it's about their background and it's about their background. Can they do a show about squirrels? Can they do it? Yeah. And and so I did that and I didn't even I didn't even tell anyone I was doing that. But for my own sanity, I thought, these are good people. These aren't these aren't bigots. And sometimes people, we need to have those conversations in the way that we're able now to talk to men about women's things. We should be able to talk to one another about unconscious bias. Yes. Absolutely. Yeah. Again, let's be, you know. Yes. Why not come out? I was working with a black comedian last night who told me that a reviewer had compared him to Seinfeld, and how absolutely delighted he was that for once, he wasn't compared to, you know, Lenny Henry. You know, it's, <sup>1s</sup> uh. Yeah. And it's tiptoeing around those conversations because you don't want to upset people and think it's really important for people to know that I trust you're not a bigot. So listen to how I'm seeing things. And that's taken me a long time. And then when you do, people are really responsive. <sup>1s</sup> And and also I think sometimes people genuinely in the from their seat over here haven't, haven't thought about you over here and how that might make you feel by pushing you over here so often. Yeah. Remember lately where you were asked. So this felt very regressive somehow because you were asked what precise background you were from. So that somebody I won't say who in in charge of your professional life could easier, um, assist with casting needs and blah blah blah blah blah. Yeah. And it just felt absolutely like something out of a eugenics program. Yeah, yeah. Because my dad. So my yeah, my dad's white, my mom's Pakistani. So you know again our kind of generation that blew people's minds in my 20s because they were like not quite brown enough, not quite white enough, you know. So I'm quite posh. Yeah. What is. But now they want the specifics to sort of like a DNA level degree. And that doesn't feel so comfortable either. No, no, I just lie. Um, no, that's not so interesting because it's, um, it's such a panic that some people have to guess when they're casting. And it's reductive because it just closes it. Yeah, it's reductive and it puts us in a really awkward situation. I, I'm, um, I'm in a

radio play. Um, I don't know when this podcast is going out, but I am in a radio play and I'm playing the lead part. And I was so, so excited. And it's called Tess of the Tollbooth. And they cast me as Tess, and no one cared if Tessa's <sup>1s</sup> Asian or black or whatever, and I was just Tess on the radio, because even on the radio, people get into a pickle. Hi. Nice. Yeah. Come on. Can't we can't we get jobs on the radio? You can't see our faces. Can't we do also acting? Isn't that acting? Like. Isn't that the point? But do you know what, Selima? I would stand up when I was younger. I wanted to be an actor. And I was in love with stand up. But I didn't go to drama school. And from a very young age, like my first jokes on stage were, I wanted to be an actor, but with the way I look, the only job I'd ever get would be someone's cousin of EastEnders. And I'd said I'd spend my acting career going, but I don't want an arranged marriage. <sup>2s</sup> I guess. Um, okay, I'm going to ask another question. Yeah. When has anger driven you to do something incredible? I think that my entire career <sup>1s</sup> is a result of repressed anger. <sup>1s</sup> Um, I don't think I would have been a standup comic if I wasn't so enraged. At. What was expected to be my place in the world. Um, which was what <sup>2s</sup> I got to say. <sup>1s</sup> It is. Pressure didn't even come from my parents. I've got the most sort of bohemian parents that never pressurised me into anything, but everything else told me that I had to, <sup>2s</sup> um, fit in to the 9 to 5. <sup>1s</sup> Um, that I can't do certain things because I'm not. Mainstream. I'm not your typical. You know I'll never be Juliet. I remember a casting director said to me, you'll never be Juliet. So like, I'm 20 years old, mate. Give me something. Um. And I and I did feel extremely stifled, um, by, uh. The people who seemed very, very good at inhabiting themselves. Like all the popular kids, I felt so ignored. And that made me so, um, angry that not being seen and not being heard. And for me, stand up comedy back in the 90s. It's different now. I don't I think I'd do something different now because standup has become so mainstream. I think I'd probably do parkour or something. But back in the 90s it was the closest thing we had to punk. Yes. Um, it was so underground. It was really opting out and being part of a subculture. And I was so angry with, with, um, politics. I was so, um, angry with, um, you know, growing up under Margaret Thatcher, I was so angry about section 28. And it wasn't until I became a young adult that I truly understood what my childhood had had endured, what people of my generation had endured and our teachers endured because they could never stick up for the kid that was constantly being called gay. Or if you're holding hands with your friend Leslie, are you alert all of this stuff? And I just was able to go out on a stage and and just I wasn't an angry comic. Don't get me wrong. I didn't go out there and vent. I just went out there and just just spilled. Just got got my fill of of life and adrenaline. It eluded me and I felt present and I felt heard and I felt alive. And I don't think I would have done if I was, um, not enraged at the world around me, at racism, at homophobia and everything, because those were my things to talk about on stage for a long time, and having a go at comics who were homophobic because it was really normal to make comments like, when is being gay going to stop being funny? That that was the thing that I would like rage about in, um. In green rooms and constantly being, you know, watching other comics or homophobic jokes. Mhm. Oh, what a beautiful answer. It was said that that was such a beautiful light that gave me goosebumps what you just said. Ehm. And also it just feels like such a powerful message to women in general is that, you know, you, the one woman comic at that point, basically used your voice in this really, really electric way to I'm I'm bloody brave. Also, let's just not let's just, let's just really acknowledge here as well. Yeah. You mean you've been bloody brave. Yeah. Be always I mean by the sounds of it. Yeah. What happened to me as well because I was, um, I had like a couple of agents in my career, one I was with for, like, most of my career. And when it came, I wanted to change agents back in 2016 or 17. And that was really hard. It was like leaving a marriage. And the one thing I knew was, I'm going to have women agents now. I'm going to have women agents. MeToo had happened. Um, and, um, <sup>1s</sup> I'm going to I'm going to do that because another thing, this is what anger did to me. And rage was I got, um. <sup>2s</sup> Around. Just before that I got, I was at a gig and I got, I got assault, I got sexually assaulted right publicly, like in a bar after the gig. And

it wasn't until last September that it went to trial. So that was something I really did out of anger that I haven't. Actually, this is the first time I've talked publicly about it. Um, because. I thought all my career shady shit has happened with men, right? And we were trying to be comics. We're trying to be. 1s Funny people. And fucked up things are happening. And then when this happened, I was like. 1s Really upset by it. Cool. And. But I didn't report it. 1s And then I did like two years later, I was just sat in my car and I was reading a Facebook post by a young again, I just honestly my. 2s My gratitude to to younger. I cry my gratitude to younger female comedians who have come out to talk about all this stuff is unreal. Because we didn't. My generation didn't. Or if we did, no one listened. And this young woman had written something about the industry and sexual assault and all this, and I just sat behind my I was parked, I hadn't set off in my car and just wept and cried and cried and cried and cried and cried and called the police, and the police took it. They were round. They took it with utmost seriousness. I had to deal with the yeah, the CPS, the funding is so low that they have to be so sure of a conviction in order to take up your case. So it took so many witnesses gathering of information to finally for it to go to court or went to court. He got convicted and he got a sentence, right, community service. And uh, uh, he was on the register for five years. And then he appealed. Now, in the first case, um, the cross-examination of me didn't take very long because there wasn't much. But then in the appeal, it took a long time. I was cross-examined for so long. For so long, um, without any extra evidence. And then the judge at one point asked me if I want a break, and I said, no, I'm okay. And I came and he and the the appeal was thrown out. But I left that court and I went back to the tube station, and I didn't get on the tube for an hour and a half. I couldn't get on there. My dad rang me, Shappi, can you call your mother an Uber? So I called my mother an Uber, and that didn't even talk much to my dad about what just happened. I just and I went to court on my own as well. Oh, I think that if I had been. Oh, if I'd been raped. If if I was 20. 1s Or if I was a drug addict or if I was raised in care. And I endured that. Massive amount of time being cross-examined. I don't know how women survive it. I don't think they do psychically. I think a bit of them never, ever recovers from that. And the guy from the CPS and the barrister kept thanking me and all the witness protection people kept saying thank you, thank you. Because when it goes to appeal, most women drop it. I just thought. It's so. It was so dark to see it that 1s it is barbaric. Mhm. 1s Yeah. So I think anger drove me to do that as well. Um but I thought enough's enough. Yeah. That's why we'll shine the light. Shine the light. Yeah. You don't get to fucking do that to me. Yeah. You see a woman on stage, she's in a position of power. And when she comes down, you want to fuck her up in some way? Yeah, that's that's what a soul is, right? It's about sex and it's about power, hatred, um, hatred and violence. And that's what I felt. I felt hatred. It's a hate crime. And I have to report a hate crime. Oh, but it was hard because, you know, my boyfriend, um, not my boyfriend during the trial, but my boyfriend when it happened. Who was my boyfriend for? Not much, much longer. I was like, oh, this will really affect your work if you report it. And so I didn't. Ah, because I felt unsafe. Not because I thought it was gonna affect my work, I felt unsupported, I felt unsafe, I suppose. I'm so sorry this happened to you, I really am. Just just think of all the people who the CPS did not have enough evidence for and who had much more impactful assaults. Um. 1s Series. I don't want to diminish what I know. I don't want to diminish anyone. 1s You know what I mean? And anyway, so that was just a lifetime of stifling rage at people's behavior. And in my industry, um, a lot of people got away with a lot of stuff. And it's funny, it's it's all it's the comedians, the male comedians. I've always felt the absolute safest with. Who are the ones that have gone since me to shop. I never did anything until I never. And I was like, no, no, it's not them. It was never them. It was never them. And the thing is, the ones who it is for can't listen, don't hear it, don't think it is, for they're probably not even aware of it. Shappi, before you go, we we'd like to invite you into our virtual rage room, which is. I mean, but do you feel up to this? Because I feel like. Are you sure? Absolutely. Let's shake it off. Okay, so this is so we like to call it quick fire. It rarely is. Um, here's your baseball

bat. You can choose the objects you want to swing it at, starting with current news item making. You see. Oh, here we go. Um, the applause that, um, Pamela Anderson is constantly getting, or any Hollywood star who has had a lifetime of the most exquisite skin treatments. Yes, you're coming along and going barefaced to an event. Um, I have not worn makeup. Um, unless I've really felt like it all my life. No one's called me brave. No. <sup>3s</sup> No one's with me. I think that that is that where the line is? It's brave enough to show your actual face. Yes. Well said, well said. It makes me. That's a new story. Um, aspect of modern life that's making you fume. Oh. Wheelie bins. I'm really sorry, but they do my back in. I've actually hurt my back trying to move them. And this idea that we suddenly get a rule that just. I can't believe I'm saying wheelie bins. Hold on a minute. No no no, no, please say wheelie bins. Why not? All right, I'm going to say wheelie bins because, um, it's an aspect of modern life. That shouldn't I shouldn't do my back in every week moving it to the pavement because I've got weirdly shaped up front garden and I pay my taxes and they should spend it more wisely and get, you know, empty the bins like they used to do normally in the olden days and not have me hurt my back. It really gets my go behavior of others, which gets on your work. People who moan about children in cafes. Oh thank you. Yes, yes I have. I have unfriended people on social media because they have moaned about going into a cafe to write, and then a bunch of mums come in with their babies. Those bunch of mums are making this world turn round you flat. And then the public cafe is not your office and a baby learning to speak. Um, Holly, um, I got to remember her name. Where's her book? I love her, right. Holly. Holly the poet, Holly McNish. She's got a book out called The Slug. I remember once she wrote a title. Yeah. She wrote on Twitter about a mum who had, um, turned around to her in a cafe and apologised for her baby being babbling loads because, you know, Holly writing. And she said your baby is learning to speak. Yeah. Well done. Holly is learning to speak. This is not my office. So people who are intolerant of babies and feel emboldened to have a go at the most defenseless, you know, it's a real London thing. You know, I think when I took my kids to Manchester, when they when they were babies, everywhere you go, you're treated like royalty. Great. You've bought a baby. Thank you for being a lovely baby here. But in London. I'm sorry everyone. Sorry, sorry, sorry. Um. Yeah. Um. Okay. Finally, your angriest moment on public transport ever. Oh, this is not a glorious story. I could not write, and I had just become vegan. Um, does this link. Okay? Well, I hadn't eaten much. Okay. And my, um, my son was with me. Oh. Because I often lose it on public transport. This woman came up to me and she said, can I just say, I think you are the funniest female comedian? And I said, thank you. And then she said, the rest of them are shit. Oh. <sup>1s</sup> And I said. <sup>1s</sup> I said, which one? Which one is shit. Give me some names. Name me one female comedian that you think is shit. And she goes, um. I said, you don't know, do you? You don't know. You can't think of anyone, can you? It's just something that you say, would you? And she goes, well, it's just my opinion and I, and I'm following her up the platform. And I said, would you go up to a black comedian and say, you're the only funny black comic? All the other ones are shit. Why is racism unacceptable to you? But sexism, misogyny of your own gender is. And she went, I think you're being out of order anyway. So she marched off and my son, who is only about ten at the time, said, mummy, I think you should stop being a vegan. Uh, <sup>2s</sup> so yeah, that was the solution. <sup>1s</sup> I'm so happy that you came on our podcast. I want to do like high fives and woops, yeah. Me too, me too. Thank you and thank you for the podcast. It's such a brilliant one. <sup>2s</sup> I love Tony Shaggi because she is such a great mixture of absolute truths and absolute wit, so I like how she approaches, you know, dark, real messy, gnarly things with a very funny, precise eye. Yeah, I really want to get it spot on. It was so shocking what she was saying about her experiences of assault and then obviously trying to get through the legal system. I, I think there is such a fundamental issue with how women are treated within the courts, where there's this enduring stereotyping where they become whores, angels, but you can know that they will never really succeed there. It's yet another example of a bedrock institution built on sexism. <sup>3s</sup> Thank you for listening and sharing in our

anger. And remember, you're not mad to feel mad. 4s Please like and subscribe. It helps other people find the podcast.