

# ROSIE JONES

The *Taskmaster* star says comedians have more power than politicians

## What's the view from your sofa?

I live in a tiny flat, and when I bought it, it felt like such an achievement. I always wanted books everywhere when I owned a place, so the view from my sofa is a whole wall of bookcases full of books and, of course, a TV on one of the shelves.

## What have you enjoyed watching recently?

I spent most of yesterday watching *Deadloch* on Amazon Prime Video. It's an Australian comedy about a set of murders in a sleepy town in Tasmania, and it's so funny, so gay and so brilliant.

## Who controls the remote in your household?

Me! I've lived on my own for a year now and I love it because it gives me my down time. Part of that joy is being at home in front of the telly, watching whatever I want. But I am a control freak, so even when I did live with other people, I would control the remote.

## When did you first realise that you wanted to go into comedy?

I've always used comedy because I was aware that having a disability meant that people stared at me. I learnt that if I took that stare and then said something funny it was almost like I was taking back the power – they were looking at me for a reason that I controlled.

**Alongside Jack Dee, Babatunde Aleshe, Andy Zaltzman and Emma Sidi, you're competing in the latest series of *Taskmaster*. How does it feel to join the ranks of so many comedy greats?** Amazing. Being disabled, I never wanted it to be patronising. Alex [Horne] made sure that I was included and involved. To do a show that I've been such a fan of for years – and feel like my disability was not a factor in the slightest – was incredible.



## Your 2023 Channel 4 documentary *Rosie Jones: Am I a R\*tard?* looked at online trolling and ableism – prejudice against disabled people. Why did you want to make it?

When I started appearing on TV, I was shocked at the amount of hate I got online. It was about what I looked like, what I sounded like, my weight, my face, my comedy, my disability, my sexuality. I felt like I couldn't complain about the abuse, and like I was attracting the hate and I should just take it and be grateful that I have a platform. But as I got more confident, I felt that I could speak out about abuse and my career wouldn't disappear as a result.

## Ableist abuse is more normalised than racist or sexist abuse. What do you think needs to shift for this to change?

A lot of people don't even know the term ableism. I'm ashamed to say that even as a disabled person I only discovered it five years ago. I had it directed to me every day and I didn't have the language for it. Everyone needs to know what ableism is and have the confidence to call it out when they see it.

## DOWN TIME



## TV SNACK/ DRINK OF CHOICE

**I've got a low-key obsession with fried chicken, chips, gravy and a cold Diet Coke.**



## FILM

***Bottoms*. A proper "geek tries to get the girl" movie. It's so funny and as a gay woman I found it so refreshing.**

## You worked as a writer on Netflix's *Sex Education* – what did you want to achieve in terms of representation?

In series one they didn't really have any disability representation. I was in the writers' room for the creation of Isaac, and I really wanted to create a disabled character who was a bit of a d\*\*\*head really, as we all are. Disability is not a type of personality, and I wanted to show that someone can have a disability, but be three-dimensional and flawed.

## Do you see comedy as a medium of education and a way to bring taboo topics to the masses?

One hundred per cent. A lot of people say to me, "You should be a politician," and I say "No" because I think that I can make more of an impact being a comedian. Under the guise of a joke, I really believe that the audience connects with you, engages with you and understands a lot more than if they were lectured by, say, a politician.

**CHARLEY ROSS**

*Taskmaster*, Thursdays 9pm C4. *Rosie Jones: Am I a R\*tard?* is available on C4 streaming