

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

You're listening to a Mamma Mia podcast.

Mamma Mia acknowledges the traditional owners of land and waters that this podcast is recorded on.

Mamma Mia Out Loud!

Hello and welcome to Mamma Mia Out Loud.

It's what women are talking about on Monday the 17th of April.

I'm Holly Wainwright.

I'm Mia Friedman.

And I'm Jesse Stevens.

And a question for my co-hosts who have just returned from holiday.

Could you, Mia Friedman, just gate-crash Jesse's honeymoon like the mum in White Loader season one?

Yes or no?

Possibly.

Surprise!

Oh my God, look at her face.

Don't worry, I have my own room.

And I'm here just one night, maybe two nights.

I'm crazy.

I'm so sorry.

I'm totally crazy, I know.

I want to apologize to my fellow mother-in-law out there.

It's not good for our brand that I went on Jesse and Luca's honeymoon.

I know there'll be questions.

We can talk about it more.

We're going to talk about actually why Jesse thinks it's a good idea in an episode later in the week.

So you did go together.

We did.

And just for a little bit of clarity, it is school holidays and Mia's family was going on a holiday.

And they said, we've got this holiday, if you want to come, come.

So you gate-crashed their family holiday.

It does appear that it was more that.

I didn't want to say it because, you know, I don't want to throw Jesse under the bus so soon in our new relationship.

But yeah.

And I don't think I said this on the pod before we left.

But I said to Luca, I think it was on the way to the airport.

What are you most looking forward to about our honeymoon?

Thinking it was going to stay romantic dinners, just hanging out, holding hands, couples massages.

And he said, just spending lots of time with my family.

I was like, you just don't hear that a lot about honeymoon, Steve.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

Every girl's dream.

Oh my God.

Now, if you're new here out loud, if you're a new out loud, are you like, what are they talking about, but just a couple of short weeks ago, Jesse Stevens, co-host, mom, me are allowed, married Mia Friedman's son.

Yes.

They've been together a long time.

We now have a show where the mother-in-law, daughter-in-law are hosting together.

Exactly right.

I am the only non-member of the family speaking on this show.

What I will say is there was a moment I wanted to message you, Holly, because I know that there are moments from our honeymoon that Holly will really have enjoyed.

She would have loved to be a spectator.

The breakfast buffet, I reckon, I would have liked.

Oh, you would have loved it.

You would have loved a glass of wine, cocktail at the end of the day, and just watching the dynamic.

And I think there are moments when you're snorkeling on your honeymoon with your new husband and

your mother-in-law's like, Jesse needs a rashie.

And you're like, I didn't see this being part of my narrative, but...

Oh, love it, Snooki.

Down to business.

On the show today, who's in, who's out, and who cares, where we're at with the coronation of King Charles and a few empty seats, plus an honest conversation about fertility privilege.

And because Mia is back, she has to share a big theory about Taylor Swift's breakup that we need to argue about immediately.

But first, Mia.

In case you missed it, a private boy school in Sydney has sent a note home declaring war on the mullet.

Waverly College told parents, if your son arrives at the college at the commencement of Term 2 with a haircut that is not in line with the college policy, he will either be sent home on his first day, or we will have a hairdresser on site where he can receive a haircut at the cost of \$20.

A hairdresser on site?

Charge.

Cheap hairdresser.

I'll be going.

Charge to his school fees account.

That's what the deputy principal, Gabby Smith told parents.

This is my favourite part.

Your son will be given a choice on this day, and a note will be logged on his file.

There will be no phone calls home, no correspondence will be entered into.

Now, if this is confusing to you, you probably have no teenage boys in your orbit, because

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

the humble Aussie mullet, which used to signify, I guess, a certain bogan aesthetic, as you would say, has become cool among the cool kids.

And I speak from experience.

Until recently, my youngest son had what would be referred to as a sick mullet, as did many of his friends.

Private schools have long drawn battle lines around haircuts, and a lot of private boys in schools mandate that hair has to be a certain length, and most private girls' schools ban things like shaved heads or hair in unnatural colours.

But it's all about the mullet at the moment.

And Jesse, your parents are teachers, and you and Holly, when we spoke about this in our morning meeting, you had a take that went beyond just schools trying to exert control over students through their hair.

Yeah.

And it is very interesting, because both of my parents work in Western Sydney, and a lot of the kids at their school are Lebanese, Pacific Islander, Indian, Asian, and there are no mullets to be seen.

And I think that mullets are about white boys cosplaying as poor boys.

I think that because it has become a bit of a status of class that's been reclaimed by this sort of indie underground...

Well, it's like it's growing cool, it's cool, it's like an ironic haircut.

It's also confusing, because we used to, people used to judge and snicker mullets and think it signified a certain thing, and then the hipsters started having them, and now people don't know how to read class anymore and they're very upset about it.

But the hipsters started having them, and I'm imagining a white hipster.

I think that if you're a person of colour in Australia and you get a mullet, you're pulled over by the police, and therefore it has more serious repercussions.

But I spoke to...

What I'm charged with having a bad haircut.

Well, I just think people...

No, but you're saying it signifies, yeah, because when my son, a white boy, had his mullet, people would lean out of cars and go, sick mullet, mate.

Yeah, you get away with more.

Is that white person?

I will never understand, and I know it's because it's not my world, why schools give a shit about haircuts, skirt lengths, makeup, like, I don't get it.

Holly, I am with you, but I spoke to my parents, dad is a deputy principal, and he has always said it is never just about the haircut.

You can tell when a kid walks in with a mullet, he says when a kid walks in with a mullet, when a kid walks in, he refuses to tuck his shirt in.

So my dad, a lot of his job is just going, tuck his shirt in, tuck his shirt in, I'm like, who cares?

But he says, when you crack down on the little things, you would be surprised at how much the big things don't happen.

It's the zero tolerance policy.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

So very famously, Rudy Giuliani, before he was an incredibly problematic friend of Donald Trump's and basically a global laughing stock, he was a very popular mayor of New York. And the theory of zero tolerance is that New York used to have a really, really high crime rate.

So, you know, tourism used to be terrible because everyone was scared of being mugged. And what Rudy Giuliani did was that he introduced this zero tolerance policy, whereby they would crack down on things like broken windows and graffiti.

Because the theory goes that if you crack down on the small things, it sets the tone or it changes the culture.

Exactly.

Yes, but the zero tolerance approach has a lot of problems.

Like it criminalizes a whole lot of behavior that doesn't need to be criminalized, fills up jails, makes criminals out of kids who are just trying to rebel.

We could talk about this for a week, but like it doesn't matter what your hair is like.

It matters what's inside your head.

I do not get it.

But it's also, and this is what I've said because I've said, oh, but isn't that a class thing?

Like are you trying to just make everyone the same and you're trying to make them homogenous?

Yes.

And my parents will fight, and I had these fights with them at school.

They will fight and say there is nothing more flattening and important for kind of stamping out class differences than a uniform.

Because they're not private schools.

They're Catholic schools.

And they will say, that's not supposed to be the topic for today.

But I will argue about this for 10 years as well, because I know that, right?

That's why in Britain, like where I grew up, like nearly every public school has a school uniform as it does here in Australia, whereas in America, it doesn't, and it's, but kids will find their ways around that every time, right?

They'll find their ways around that with the shoes that they're wearing.

No, the more strict the uniform code, the harder it is for them to do that.

So at my daughter's school, for example, they're really strict about things like earrings, jewelry, and it drives the girls crazy.

But to me, I like it.

I mean, it's so funny, because of course I used to rebel when I was at school, but, but I really like it because to me, it teaches the lesson that, I don't know, sometimes you got to do things you don't want to do, sometimes you can't be a special individual and you've just got to be one of the sheep and following rules that seem really arbitrary.

It identifies you as part of a community.

The one thing I will say about the hairdresser at the school, my parents, 50 years of teaching between them, they said, nah, you got to send the kid home.

That's got to be the consequence.

And that is on the parents to get that kid's haircut.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

And they say as well, you can see a certain haircut on a kid and go, that kid thinks they're in charge.

That is so judgmental in 25 layers.

And I love your parents and you know I do.

And I agree with them on most things.

This is a very Catholic school, private school world, right?

The kind of school that I went to and the kind of school my kid goes to, they don't give us stuff what you're wearing as long as you're broadly looking like the uniform because that's not what matters.

It's a distraction.

You worry about where the kids at and you engage them there rather than trying to force them into a box and making it seem like it matters what haircut they've got.

I want the out loudest to tell us what they think.

Do you reckon that if you're at school, you should be allowed to just walk around with your mullet or is this an important thing, that you're part of a community, you're part of something bigger than yourself and we don't have mullets, isn't that how the workplace works?

You're a part of a community of people with mullets.

Prince Harry is to attend his father's coronation next month but his wife, Megan, will stay at home in California with a couple's children.

I think that we must all be grateful that Kate said she wouldn't have it there.

There's an awful lot of confusion and chaos I think it was put to me a few times last week about the preparations and we're only three weeks away.

It'll be the first time that the Duke of Sussex has been seen with the royal family since his memoir was published.

So he's got to be there.

Who's keeping up with King Charles' big party?

He's only been planning it for 74 years, so no biggie, and he's not that stoked about how it's shaping up.

For a start, the guest list was only finalised last week when the last outstanding RSVP from the Montecito Sussexes, Harry and Megs, finally pressed go on the paperless post, yes, but only for Harry, not for Megs.

Because that RSVP, it must be on the record, it was late.

It was late.

It was meant to be the first week of April.

It was.

It was nearly two weeks late.

So there was definitely a follow-up and just a polite, hey guys, just wondering, exactly, which could be seen as a power move or could be explained by the fact that insiders, royal insiders, and if we've learned anything from what Harry and Megan have been telling us for the past six months, is that royal insiders are the royals.

So insiders are always to be believed, so that the reason it was late is because Harry and Megs had a lot of questions.

Where exactly will we be seated?

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

Who will be in front of us?

Who will be behind us?

Because they will be in shot in all of the pictures of us.

And so that was all needed to be sorted out before Haas could press.

Will someone be putting bunny ears over our head in the photos?

And then Harry and Megs' insiders, who as we know is Harry and Megs, have said that they've made a decision that feels genuine and authentic to them, especially after everything that's been said about them.

The words that Harry and Megan have said about the importance of their family are lining up with their actions.

They care about their family, so Megan's staying in California because it's Archie's birthday's four, and it's very important that she's there, and Harry is going to support his dad.

I've missed my kids' birthdays many times, one time just to go to Liza's wedding last year when we...

Yeah.

I wanted to get there a day early.

It was different, but anyway.

I had to do an interview.

I was away from work, so I changed the date of my child's birthday.

They were turning two or something.

They don't know when they're little.

They don't know.

They don't know.

They just had it on a different day.

It's likely that Harry will instead sit with some minor royals.

He's big mates with Eugenie, for example.

She was the only royal who got a look in the insufferable, I mean, the very insightful endless documentary that we watched last year.

Called...

Wow!

But then again, Eugenie's mum Fergie didn't get an invite, so there may be some...

To the coronation.

Going.

Is Andrew?

I think Andrew is, yes, but I don't think he's getting front row, and he won't be on the balcony.

The problem is there are too many problematic royals now that the balcony is just going to be...

I would like a separate balcony for the problematic royals.

Yes.

That would be the fun...

That would be the balcony...

Well, actually, no.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

The fun balcony.

Yes, but apart from that...

Megan.

So, the spotlight...

So, Eugenie, Megan, Andrew.

Who else is on that balcony?

Princess Michael of Kent.

Yes, with a racist jewellery, actually, no, we don't want to be with those people.

So the spotlight will be very firmly on the Waleses, on William and Kate, because they are the future of the monarchy.

And their kids have actual official roles in the ceremony.

Every bride is getting the vibes on this, right?

George is going to be a page boy, as his grandad marries.

It's not clear.

The crown, God, a nation, we're not sure.

But anyway, well, that all that happens.

But it is a shame that Megan isn't going, because I have some details for you about the coronation that the British traditional media have gone a bit nuts about, because they say it's too woke.

They say King Charles's coronation is woke.

Do you want to hear what they are?

Yeah.

The invites are on recycled paper.

It's an all-paper research, shouldn't all paper be recycled at this point?

There is gold leaf on them, but they made a point in their Instagram post about them to say that they are on recycled paper, all 2,000.

Oh, that's funny.

If you want to be environmentally savvy, I mean, paperless posts, but continue.

Exactly.

He's cut short the parade, because he doesn't want it to seem like it's too big a deal.

So it's now only going to have about 600 people marching behind him in his car.

You know, he doesn't need a coronation.

Like, if he decided not to have one, he would still be the king.

There is no tradition, formality, that means he has to have a coronation.

This is all just ceremonial to try and trump up support for the money.

So not that woke.

Propaganda.

Propaganda.

No, no, no.

Propaganda.

He's invented a new emoji for the ceremony, which goes to show that royals can do anything, including invent their own emojis.

There's a little King George crown that has just been invented specifically for the coronation.

King George.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

Oh, no, like the crown is from King George's time.

Oh, yeah.

Yeah.

He'll be using that in a couple of weeks and he's made sure that the seats that are very thoughtfully outside the coronation are going to veterans and NHS workers who helped the nation during the pandemic, another sign apparently that he's lost his woke mind.

So this has proved that he's too woke.

What he could do is instead of spending \$150 million on his coronation, he could just help out the crippled NHS in London slash cost of living crisis, which everyone is living through instead of giving them a chair and not allowing them to go to the toilet for seven hours.

Exactly.

When they've probably worked a double.

And my last dig is that as well as the recycled paper, he's also using recycled star power for the concert because it's full of old favorites.

Like, take that.

Oh, no.

Take that but without Robbie Williams, presumably, because he's already said no.

Exactly.

So I was reading about why Lionel Richie and Katy Perry had to do it because I was like, okay, Lionel Richie, maybe he doesn't have the internet and doesn't know that, you know, bit on the nose, this whole monarchy thing.

But Katy Perry, not a good look for her brand.

Interesting.

However, she is a special envoy ambassador to some Prince Charles charity.

So when she got the tap, you can just imagine, she got her email and just went, oh, no, I've got to do it.

She works with a charity that's associated with the King, as you say, that helps with child trafficking in developing countries.

So a really good cause, right?

But try and do something good.

It's really clear that in all of the media that is reporting this, that her people were like, put that bit in, put that bit in because it's mentioned every time.

She sings like, he's to go and I like it, that'd be woke.

That would be woke.

I just reckon, though, that Megan had no choice, right?

She had no choice.

I feel sorry for her.

She couldn't go because if she did go, she would have pulled focus and been accused of that the entire time.

It would have been about what she wore, who she walked in front of, whether she whispered in Harry's ear, all her relationships with Kate and Will, Nightmare.

But don't, and I know we don't want to get too far down this, but I just think he shouldn't be going either.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

Like I read that book.

Of course not.

I read that book and I was like, you can't say all that shit and then turn up.

That's like me turning up at my dad's 80th birthday party after I wrote a whole book about him being a selfish idiot.

He would be like, no birthday cake for you, Holly.

You have rescinded your privileges to come and eat the set menu at my love rest.

But also how he wrote that the whole, not just about his father, but the whole institution is corrupt and racist and classist and all these terrible things.

But not so much that he doesn't support it.

And not so much that he doesn't want his children to be called Prince and Princess and that they don't want to be called Duke and Duchess.

So once again, I'm just going to say they're happy with the trimmings, but it's like they want to be half pregnant.

You can't be.

I'm going to be an outlaw.

Before we get into this segment, quick content warning, we're going to be talking about the idea of fertility privilege, which will include discussions of miscarriage and struggles to conceive.

And we know that for a portion of our audience, this is a conversation they might not want to listen to right now, in which case skip ahead and meet us at Taylor Swift.

I would argue that the people who will most benefit from this are the people who are struggling at the moment, but that's because you know how I feel about content warnings.

So it's obviously going to be your own discretion.

Exactly.

I was introduced to the term fertility privilege over the weekend in a column by Elizabeth Day.

Day is the host of How to Fail, a brilliant UK podcast, and she's a really successful author and journalist who has been really open about her long standing struggles with fertility.

She's been through IVF.

She has had multiple miscarriages.

She's done egg freezing.

She's done everything.

10 years.

She's been on this as she described it journey.

She writes, we rightly talk about privilege in this era of social change, but hardly anyone acknowledges fertility privilege.

I wouldn't post about my glorious babies on social media in much the same way I wouldn't post about my expansive mansion or my fleet of Bentley's.

Not that I have any of those because it's thoughtless to those who don't have these things.

Forget the language of privilege for a second.

Isn't it just lacking in basic empathy?

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

Isn't it just being a good human?

I couldn't disagree more even though I love her, but have you got more to say before we get into it?

Yes.

So that's actually an excerpt from her new book, Friendaholic.

And in a recent episode of Best Friend Therapy, which is another podcast she does, she talked about the complexity of fertility privilege, particularly the pain of seeing friends share scans without warning on social media.

And here's what she said.

What a lot of women go through when they also have social media.

We've become a society where it's not only acceptable, it's expected that people will share their baby scans.

I cannot tell you how triggering that is when I'm following someone from Made in Chelsea or another reality TV show, or someone I know who just posts unthinkingly a picture of their baby scan.

You might say, well, don't follow them.

And I then unfollow or mute, but I don't know that's going to happen.

And some people have friends of mine of what's at me, just a picture of their baby scan to announce their pregnancy, knowing what I've been through.

And it's things like that that are like, I can't wrap my head around it because I sort of think, gosh, you're so lucky, you're so privileged that getting that baby scan, I've had so many baby scans, and I've never had a baby.

Okay.

And again, the same thing with baby showers.

I can't imagine the luck that you must have to feel that this is a sure thing.

Yeah.

Because this is where privilege comes in, isn't it?

And that fertility privilege that you so rightly coin.

I thought that was brilliant.

She'd articulated something I had never considered due to the prism of my own experience, which can be called privilege.

And it inevitably leaves me ignorant to so many other realities like pain, grief and trauma that are all around me.

And one thing she reminded me is the absolute privilege of what she refers to in that podcast as a blissful pregnancy.

And while I don't entirely own that word blissful, I know what people mean, which is to have a pregnancy where you've never lost one before, and there's such an ignorance.

I think ignorance is a pretty kind of pejorative and critical word.

I would say it's a, I guess it's a blissful ignorance.

It's an innocence.

Innocence is a better word.

That's the word.

I think it's innocence because...

You get to look forward to all of it.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

You get to look at the heartbeat and look at the scans and not have, and I'm sure that all women have a little bit of anxiety, but to just have an understated confidence that everything will go as it should.

And to not have the shadow of loss cast over every moment of what can be a really exciting experience.

Mia, we throw the word privilege out a lot.

What do you think of Elizabeth Day's take there?

I was obviously very moved by hearing what she said.

And when she said that, when you could hear her voice crack and she said, I've had so many baby scans and I've never had a baby like...

Had you ever considered that?

I had never considered that a scan would be triggering and it makes so much sense.

Is it triggering for you because you've obviously had similar experiences?

It's not.

And this is where we've spoken a lot about triggers, how triggers are very, very personal. Even though I've had so many of the experiences that Elizabeth Day speaks about in terms of miscarriage, in terms of going for scans when there's no heartbeat, in terms of all of those things and the pain of not conceiving.

But I'm triggered personally when I have to have any kind of medical test.

Like if I have to have an x-ray, if I have to have a mammogram, anything like that.

And it's only recently that I realized they call it scan anxiety because of what's happened to me in previous scans.

Other people posting their ultrasounds has never affected me.

So it's not that every woman is going to be affected in the same way that she is by seeing a picture of someone else's scan and what upsets me about what she said in her book or what I disagree.

I can't disagree with it because of the way she feels, but I'm going to push back on it.

When she says that women uncaringly, recklessly post, unthinkingly post scans on social media, it's the opposite of that.

When you are pregnant and you want to share your scan, firstly you don't know if that woman's also had a hundred miscarriages or struggled, but it is the biggest joy.

And what are we saying?

We can't post things that are huge joys to us in case they are upsetting for someone else who has not been able to experience that joy.

So then by extension, she says it's the same as posting your mansion or your Bentley.

I find that offensive.

I don't mean offensive in the way of I'm offended, but I'm taken aback by that because it's very different.

If I'm on a holiday or if I get engaged and I want to post a picture of my engagement or my wedding, is that insensitive because there's someone out there who's been widowed and there's someone out there who's just had their heart broken and there's someone out there who's never had a partner?

I just feel that we have to take responsibility for ourselves.

And she says that later in that interview, which is kind of different to what she said

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

in the book, which is that everyone else needs to be more caring.

She says, I understand it's up to me to manage my triggers and how I feel in the world.

But I also want to push back on the word privilege, Holly, and I'm interested in what you think because I feel like the word privilege is infused, I guess, in its positive connotation.

You could say have some perspective, right?

So be aware of the fact that it's awesome that you're pregnant, but there are other people that aren't pregnant.

Now, of course, most women that are pregnant will either have been the woman who couldn't be pregnant or no other women.

So it's not like you don't know that.

But what do you even do with that?

The idea of privilege is suggesting insensitivity.

It's suggesting that you should feel guilty.

It's suggesting somehow that you've done something wrong just by...

Well, what the piece is?

Or is it just about acknowledging...

I mean, because I agree with you.

There are things about this conversation that are tricky because one of the reasons why that comparison with the Bentleys feels so weird is the percentage of people with Bentleys and mansions is tiny, whereas actually statistically, the majority of people have children and majority of adult people do have children.

That's why it feels a bit jarring.

But all those words that you just put with privilege, I don't think that's actually the definition of privilege.

That's how that word makes you feel like you're being told off.

When you're not really being told off, you're being asked to consider how it makes other people feel.

You have to consider how your fortunate circumstances, which probably have absolutely nothing to do with you.

As in, you know, you were born lucky in inverted commas, effects of the people.

I found it really interesting because the reason it's tricky, fertility is a very lonely struggle.

Anyone who's had any dealings with it knows because everywhere you look, not just social media, but just everywhere you look, it seems like people are having babies who don't even in your mind want to, deserve to, should, you know, and I know that those are all really judgmental words.

But when you're there, when you're struggling, you're like, how can that person over there who's feeding their baby Coke, like have a baby when I can't have a baby when I haven't eaten sugar in five years because I'm trying to blood like it feels so lonely.

And I think she talks in this interview, which is a brilliant show about, you know, how education at school is all focused on how not to get pregnant and, you know, dealing with unwanted pregnancies in the form of abortion and is such an enormous tenant of feminism and all it.

So we put all this focus on how easy it is to get pregnant in theory and how it's not something that everybody wants.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

And if you're somebody who like in her circumstance, it's all she wants and all she's wanted for 10 years, it's not surprising that your triggers, the hair triggers, they're very, very sensitive, you know, and I think that that is really understandable.

The thing about everything's weighted towards abortion and how not to get pregnant and contraception, it's about control.

So all of those things are about how to enable women to have control over their bodies and their fertility.

What infertility is, is an utter lack of control.

So again, I understand why she had a great point about empowering women to know more about contraception and fertility and more funding and research because she didn't know that all of that was really interesting that the pill might mean we're sold this myth that you go off the pill and you have triplets like that's not what happens.

I think the other problem though with calling it out as privilege is that it's not a fixed point.

You've kind of touched on me, lots and lots of women who have struggled with fertility are mothers, you know, did eventually get that scan, you know, did eventually get that baby shower, did eventually get that birth, not everybody, of course, and the idea that celebrating that can be insensitive is really difficult.

And the other bit that I find difficult and I know I'm speaking from my privilege is that Elizabeth Day and her co-host on the show, whose name I'm afraid I've forgotten but she's brilliant psychologist, also had quite a big dig at complaining about motherhood pregnancy, anybody who complains about pregnancy symptoms, anyone who complains about motherhood being hard.

We can't win.

They talked quite a lot about the wine time stereotype, which I know irritates lots of us about like how hard parenting is that rankles me probably because I'm defensive.

Sometimes no one's more judgmental than someone who really wants what you've got and they see what you're doing with it, that can be really hard.

But also because anything that silences women is not to be celebrated, in my opinion, it might feel now like we swim in a soup of women bitching about how tough parenthood is.

But that's only because the pendulum has swung back to correct something that was very much ingrained in the feminine culture, which was that you were never allowed to complain about it.

You are the luckiest woman alive, you've got the best job in the world, this is an absolute privilege when actually any parent can tell you, and especially mothers, that it changes everything about your life, your financial status, your relationship, your identity, your career, your health.

If you're not allowed to talk about any of that, it's not good for women.

But also what's the opposite of that?

It's saying, I've never felt a love like it in my life.

It has completed me in a way nothing else possibly ever could.

Now if I say that, which is how I feel about motherhood, that's insensitive.

You cop it if you say that, if you say good things, you cop it because you're flaunting

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

your privilege.

So we meant to just not talk about motherhood at all, but maybe we're just meant to be considerate of how we talk about it and how it makes people feel.

In a very specific position, and what I loved about Elizabeth Day and her position on this is that I don't think I have ever heard a woman talk about fertility like this, who, guess what?

The story doesn't end with a baby.

Yeah.

And she's grappling with that.

And there are so many women who are living like that, going, you've got no idea.

Your story is different to mine because it has a different conclusion.

And I appreciate that.

The thing that I just wanted to add, and I don't want to detract from her experience because it has changed how I will talk about parenting and I appreciate it, but what I will add is that from the perspective of someone who had a surprise pregnancy, surprise pregnancies

are seen as the height of fertility privilege, right?

It's like, oh, you weren't even trying, you weren't even trying and look at you.

People get angry, they genuinely get angry.

And what I'll say about that is that if you look at the statistics of anti-natal and postnatal depression when it comes to surprise pregnancies, they're significantly higher and anti-natal depression is something we still don't talk about.

Just because someone has something you want does not mean they are happy.

And there are a lot of people that you can look at a pregnant woman or the position that she's in or whatever and assume that if you were in that position, you'd be happy.

But when a woman is in the depths of either really serious health complications, which you can get during pregnancy, but depression, suicidal ideation, feeling as though they need to be grateful every minute of every day and they're not, I just don't think you can tell that woman she's living in a state of privilege.

And this is why it's very complicated because there are also lots of women who fought for their babies incredibly hard through a fertility journey, who then also get postnatal depression.

Yeah.

And they have this double whammy of guilt about that.

So the thing that is so disheartening in a way is it feels like there's no way to talk about this intense experience without some kind of shame.

Like, you know, I'm lucky about this, I'm unlucky when really, I think what we should be doing is welcoming all voices on it.

You know, who gets to though is men.

And I know that it's very different.

There is a very embodied female experience sometimes when it comes to pregnancy.

But men don't have this layer of gratitude, sensitivity, all shame, privilege.

They don't even get a look in and they have babies in their arms too.

My final problem with this is that it is not binary.

The idea that you've either got fertility privilege because you have a live baby or

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

you don't have fertility privilege because you don't, if you've got more than one child, it's very likely that you've had at least one miscarriage.
So for example, I've had many miscarriages.
I've had secondary infertility.
I've had three children.
I've lost a baby halfway through a pregnancy.
So do I have fertility privilege or not?
And who gets to decide?
Yeah, there have been a few.
Who are you seeing at the moment?
I don't really talk about my personal life because it's sort of like it goes everywhere and then it gets turned into all these other things.
And it's like I would much rather my personal life be sung about.
I think it sounds nicer that way.
But you're getting these great songs out of breakups.
Oh, come on.
Now, when I was away, I was listening, as all of you out louders do, to us talk.
And I did what many of you do, which is I talked back when there was a topic that I wanted to have my opinion on.
Unlike you, I got to then, well, you can also go in the outlaws and give your opinion.
But unlike you, I got to then say, let's redo that segment where I can give my opinion.
And of course, it's about, of course, it's about the breakup of Taylor Swift and Joe Alwyn that happened, well, a few weeks ago now, but that was talked about on the show last week.
And I can't remember what you said really, because all of it was wrong.
It was Holly, Claire Stevens, Elfie Scott, and you all had, you know, interesting things to say, but none of you got to the nub of why I think they broke up.
How do you know?
So this news broke over the Easter weekend, the Easter long weekend, by the way, which is probably Taylor like putting the trash out while everyone was distracted by chocolate.
Very strategic, very clever.
And one of the problems with the casting of last week's show, which was obviously brilliant with Elfie and Claire, is that none of us really care about Taylor Swift in the way that Mia does.
But also perhaps we had some respect for the fact that none of us would have any idea why Taylor and Joe broke up.
You know what it was, it was a cast with humility.
And what we've got is we've come back and humility is gone.
It's a cast that was lacking expertise, I would say.
Now, I'm going to float the theory, which I believe to be fact.
You're going to know, you're going to yell your facts.
I'm just going to tell you what I think.
Yeah.
OK, which is Taylor Swift and Joe Alwyn have been together for six years, right?
So when they got together, it was at the height of her cancellation.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

In fact, she had been dragged through the mill by Kim Kardashian and Kanye West, who had released some voicemail message that made it seem like she'd agreed to something that she said she hadn't.

And it was a song in which Kanye called her a bitch.

It's very detailed, but everyone was trying to basically, she was on the outs.

She was being canceled.

She went to ground two years, didn't hear from her, released no music, was not photographed, did no interviews, nothing.

She then came out with an album, which I absolutely loved.

You'll be shocked to hear called Reputation.

That was all basically just about she co-opted everything they said about her,

which was, you know, there were canceled Taylor parties on Twitter that was trending.

And they would use this serpent emoji about her being a snake and two faced and all this stuff.

I went to that live tour in Sydney and she had all these big live snake emojis.

And she basically co-opted that whole narrative and made it her own and basically said, you've burned my reputation to the ground.

I've got none.

Therefore, I can start again.

And there's something quite freeing in that in the rebirth.

And it was her, that album was her putting out all her trash of her complicated feelings about being canceled.

Is this context important?

Sorry, I forgot.

What are we talking about again?

Anyway, so she met him when she was at her low point, right?

Yeah.

So he was an up-budding actor, very handsome man.

No one knew who he was, but gorgeous, handsome English British.

She likes her blonde British men.

She knows.

They were very quiet.

Their relationship was very quiet for a couple of years.

She'd had a few high profile ones.

So, so they sort of, you know, lived and then she did her Reputation album, which was great.

And then soon after that, she did another album, which was quite good.

His career was still, you know, on the way up, and then it was COVID.

Now, for COVID, they were both just, neither of them could work.

So they stayed at home for two years.

He wrote some music with her.

She released two incredible albums, Evermore and Folklore.

And her career, she was always a big commercial success, but she then became a critical success.

Her career went to a whole other level during and after COVID.

She's now on this tour that is broken every record in terms of selling out all over the world, breaking ticket master systems.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

It's a three and a half hour concert, which has never been done.
Like she's won all these awards.
She's like, it's ridiculous.
She's also rerecording all our other albums.
My point is, she needs to write a PhD.
If you're wondering, if you're wondering what my point is,
his career, since COVID finished, hasn't really happened.
Okay, he did that album that Lena had done a movie.
He wasn't very good in it.
Conversations with friends?
Conversations with friends.
He wasn't very good in it.
I thought it was fun.
He should have been blowing up.
His career should be blowing up.
He should be the leading man on his way up.
The new Ryan Gosling, the new Ryan Reynolds, the new Brad Leo, all of those things.
Hasn't happened.
He's not a very good actor.
Seems like a lovely guy.
Seems good for her.
I'm happy he's been there for her over these years.
But I just think that would be very difficult in a relationship.
You're being sexist.
You're being sexist.
No, I'm just saying difficult for him and difficult for her.
So your theory is that what?
She's dumped him because he's not successful,
or he's dumped her because he can't handle the success with what's your theory?
My theory is neither.
So they've always been very careful that they've never been photographed together
and on a red carpet.
They don't talk about each other in interviews.
Very smart.
I think more probably for his benefit,
because in the same way that Chris Martin didn't want to be Mr. Gwyneth Paltrow,
when her fame eclipsed his,
he doesn't want to be Mr. Taylor Swift.
Smart career move.
But I think the balance of power and where they are in their careers
have got them on two very different paths.
I think he is disappointed in his career.
I think he is frustrated that things aren't going as swimmingly.
And even though he loved Taylor and maybe still does,

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

to watch your partner be king of the world
and you're just like stuck on first base,
I think that would be very challenging.
So it's sad because you don't realise how sexist you're being,
but luckily you've got me here.

Yes.

So it's interesting that we talk about the balance of power and relationships,
almost exclusively when it's the woman who's got the power and not the man, right?

That we start going,

oh, there's a funny dynamic that would be very difficult to reconcile.

Let's talk about the balance of power in Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith.

Jada Pinkett Smith, you know,

maybe not the best example of a marriage made in heaven.

No, not made in heaven,

but it's just interesting that at no point,
we looked at Will Smith's career soaring and we go,

oh, I wonder how Jada feels about that.

What about Barack and Michelle Obama?

Yeah, or Bruno Mars, for example,

is with some woman named Jessica, right?

I've never heard of her.

I Googled her.

Apparently she is a, like, she really wants to be an actress.

Her name's Jessica.

I've never seen her in anything.

We don't look at that and go, poor Jessica must be finding it really hard.

No, but that's because they're together.

So I'm saying some couples can find a way,

Michelle and Barack, Jada and Will in their way,

can find a way to navigate that, right?

When the difference in where you are.

And I think also there are many couples where
one person doesn't just have the same ambitions as the other
and they're very happy to do whatever they're doing
or they can navigate it.

But my point is the fact that they've split up

and there has to be a reason and my theory is that,

I'm not saying that and I'm not being completely serious about that,
obviously.

But I feel that this was a fissure in their relationship
that just grew bigger and wider and ultimately couldn't be breached.

I think you can't conceive of the idea that Joe Alwyn doesn't want to be,
maybe he doesn't want to be Brad Pitt.

No, no, he does.

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

How, well, why is he making such weird choices in his movies then?
Because he's not going to be better.
They're not like to him.
I don't believe him.
Have you met Hollywood?
You know how it works.
It's not like Joe Alwyn goes,
should I be in, you know, the next Quentin Tarantino movie
or should I do this kind of bit part in Lena Dunham's next film that's on streaming?
I think that the thing is, is that we look at success in a very binary way
and we imagine that if he's not a megastar making loads of money
like Taylor Swift is and he must be frustrated
and that's a big assumption, I would argue.
Well, he hasn't been critical and maybe he's very happy you're right.
But I would say, you know, most people who are actors
want to be, they don't necessarily want to be in Marvel movies.
Like that's one type of success.
But they might want to be doing really interesting work,
getting lots of opportunities.
Maybe he wants to write songs with his girlfriend.
He doesn't, he's not like working with good directors.
He's not, he's not getting the opportunities.
Lena Dunham's a good director.
I've been married for two weeks.
So I know more than you bitches.
And what I will say about relationships
is that intimate relationships aren't about all the shit that we can see.
Right? So we can see the success in the album
and the tour and the blow up line
and that might have excited Joe for three minutes.
But intimate relationships are about the person you get into bed with at night
and it's silent and the lights are off and you're not talking
and it's about a feeling and like, I just don't think
that all of that mess and distraction
is what actually breaks up couples.
I think it is something banal.
It is something like they're both looking,
they're at that stage where it's like,
are we going to stay together? Are we going to get married?
Are we going to have kids? Maybe neither of them want kids.
I'm not saying it's the only reason.
I'm just saying it's a fundamental factor
that if you are disappointed in the way your life is going
or the way in a part of your life is going

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

and it's not like they can just hang together
having brunch and writing music.
She's off on a tour.
He's not going to see her for years now, right?
Well, that's probably more of it.
That's probably, yeah.
That's probably more of a reason.
More so than a threatened.
Because otherwise we're saying that really hyper successful people
can only be with other hyper successful people.
And we just made that whole point about-
All people who aren't ambitious.
Yeah, some people who aren't ambitious.
And I think that we need to like loosen up
our idea of what success looks like, right?
I don't think that career success is the only thing
that makes you happy or confident.
Like there are lots of other things that can do that.
I've just got a vibe.
I have a recommendation.
It's nothing to do with Taylor, but I watched
and I know some of the out louders did too
because I've seen some chit chat in the Facebook group.
The Brooke Shields documentary Pretty Baby on the weekend.
It's in two parts.
It's on Disney Plus.
You just didn't go anywhere that somebody wouldn't know Brooke Shields.
The most photographed woman in the world.
Iconic American beauty.
Object of desire.
A sexualized child model.
Exploitation.
Vulnerable.
I was on the cover of Time Magazine as the face of that whole era.
The first part in particular is absolutely mind boggling,
especially for somebody who I remember Brooke Shields
being this iconic teenage sex symbol in my youth, right?
And she was kind of the epitome of sexy and beautiful
and all these things.
And what you are reminded of in the starkest possible way
in that first part of this is she was a child.
She was in her first nude, sexy, inverted commas shoot
that she and her mum got paid for when she was 10.
That was Playboy, right?

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / A Very Candid Conversation About 'Fertility Privilege'

It wasn't for Playboy, but it was for a publication under the Playboy umbrella.

Got it.

The pictures later became the subject of a court case.

It's astounding.

But how comfortable we were with one of the biggest sex symbols of the era being 11, 12, 13, 14 is mind boggling to me.

So the documentary itself is not perfect.

You know how there are some of those documentaries on streaming that you're like, wow, there is a little bit of clumsy messaging, but the facts of it are incredible.

And then it follows her through to today and she's got teenage daughters who are all like, mum, I can't believe how you did that.

And she was like, well, why?

And her opinions about it are quite nuanced.

She isn't just kind of sitting around going, I was exploited.

It's absolutely fascinating.

And I think I'm going to write about it this week too, because it made me realize that the mass sexualization of teenage girls in that era did damage in all kinds of ways, not just to those girls, but to all of our perceptions of sexy.

And also, it's just how far we've come.

Anyway, it's extraordinary.

Pretty baby.

It's on Disney Plus.

It's in two parts.

I'm going to watch it.

I just started watching it on your recommendation and I'm desperate after we've all watched it to talk about it on the show.

So out louders, get it in your eyes.

If you can, it's on Disney Plus.

Thank you for listening to Mamma Mia Out Loud.

This episode is produced by Emma Gillespie, assistant production from Susanna Makin.

And we will see you tomorrow.

Bye.

Shout out to any Mamma Mia subscribers listening.

If you love the show and you want to support us, subscribing to Mamma Mia is the very best way to do it.

There's a link in the episode description.