

Jenny Lewis On Her Obsession With Adidas Tracksuits, *Troop Beverly Hills* And Why Her 'Whole Life Is A Costume Party'



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[Jenny Lewis](#) is the very definition of a modern Renaissance woman. While you probably know her as the frontwoman of beloved indie rock band Rilo Kiley, she's also released albums with the Watson Twins and The Postal Service as well as

with her boyfriend, Jonathan Rice, as part of Jenny & Johnny. On July 29, her third solo album, *The Voyager*, hits stores; the star-studded music video for the first single, "[Just One of the Guys](#)," is already blowing up the internet.

Although music may be her passion, however, Lewis actually got her start in Hollywood. A child star from the age of nine, she's appeared in both TV shows (*Baywatch*, *The Golden Girls*, *Growing Pains*, *Roseanne*) and movies ([Troop Beverly Hills](#), *The Wizard*) alike. But today, it's her tunes, her fantastically tomboyish sense of style and that incredible head of red hair that really gets the crowd going. I recently had the chance to chat with Lewis about her fashion evolution, her acting past and her new album—read on for the scoop!

Lucky: First and foremost, we have to discuss the amazing rainbow suit you're wearing on your new album cover. What's the story behind it?

Jenny Lewis: The designer is a guy called Adam Siegel, who is part of Autumn de Wilde's amazing production team—Autumn is a photographer who I've collaborated with on my last five album covers, and I've made a handful of videos with her as well. She works with her stylist, Shirley Kurata, and Adam, who's her set designer. All of us get together and talk about the plan for the visual side of each record. That's something that's always been really important to me—particularly as a solo artist—being able to tell a story in the liner notes, in the album art, that goes along with the songs.

Adam was a graffiti artist in Los Angeles in the '80s, and he started tinkering around with airbrush painting. Autumn suggested that he paint something for the album cover, and I knew I wanted to wear a suit. I felt very—almost *androgynous* after making this record. I didn't feel like wearing a dress, and I certainly didn't feel like wearing hot pants, which was something I'd worn on the last Rilo Kiley album. They were something I'd done to death! So I wanted a very strong, almost iconic look that was a little bit masculine. We talked about him painting on a white suit, and I gave him a color palette and some direction. I wanted it to look like *Cosmos*, the Carl Sagan series—and kind of like a graffiti Gram Parsons! There were some colors I wanted to highlight, too, like purple and mint green—and little did I realize that I was basically copying the *My Little Pony* palette! *[Laughs]*

It looks awesome! Are you going to wear the same suit on tour every night, though?

Well, I have two. I have the suit I wear on the album cover, and then I have a full three-piece suit—with shoes!—that matches my guitar as well. But I don't know if I'm actually allowed to dry clean them. So we're going to have to see how this

unfolds. Hopefully I can convince Adam to paint another one for me. But I'm going to wear them for every show—I don't care!

In addition to the painted suit, I've noticed from your [Instagram](#) that you're big into the classic Adidas tracksuit as well. How'd that obsession start?

First of all, it's so awesome that you follow me on Instagram. I love taking pictures, and I never actually realized that until I started using Instagram last year. But anyway, the tracksuits...I started wearing them when I was 15 because I was a huge hip-hop fan. But in the '90s, the tracksuits were very oversized—they didn't make them in girl sizes. So revisiting the tracksuit happened last year while I was touring with The Postal Service. I got a hookup and now I own, I'd say, around 15 to 20 of them. I have a whole rainbow of colors—and when a new one comes in, they send it to me! I hope to design my own tracksuit for Adidas at some point—maybe one that looks like the suit from my album cover, but in tracksuit form.

You could get "The Voyager" embroidered across the back, maybe...

That would be so sick. I would love to also outfit my entire band in tracksuits, so that when we come through an airport, we look like a sports team.

How would you say your personal style's evolved since your early Rilo Kiley days? It's been over 15 years since you guys first got together!

I've always been a tomboy, and growing up, I never wore skirts or shorts. I never showed my arms or legs—I was very shy. So when I first started playing with the band, I wore jeans and t-shirts only, mostly out of practicality. We were in a van, I had one suitcase, and I was basically washing my face in a public bathroom every night. But as I started to feel more comfortable as an artist—and as a woman fronting a band—I started feeling sexy when I never had before. So through the band, my fashion changed. I started wearing skirts, and then shorts—and before you knew it, I was in hot pants! It's so crazy—I felt so shy for so long, so uncomfortable in my own skin—and through my music, I was able to express myself. But at this particular moment, it doesn't feel right for me to be in hot pants or a romper. I don't want to seem like one of those "old little girls."

Well, you're *hardly* old...

But you know what I mean! You want to dress somewhat age-appropriate...but I guess there are no rules. I mean, next year I could be wearing a swimsuit onstage, for all I know!

Any fashion regrets you can share from over the years?

I've definitely had some unfortunate fashion phases—but also some fun thematic phases! Like, "just off a horse" was my style for a while. My boyfriend is always really good at naming my outfits; my most recent look is "Italian gelato saleswoman." That involves a weird linen suit and a straw hat.

Very summery. Let's talk about your hair for a second—it basically has its own fan club. How do you keep it looking great while touring?

It's funny—my hair has actually gotten way curlier in my 30s. It must be hormonal or something. Anyway, I have to tame it now more than I used to. I try to wash it less frequently now, since that makes it look better—it's so hard, though, to resist the urge when you're on the road. But when I do wash it, I'll immediately put it in two braids afterwards. I don't let it fully dry while braided, but that just sort of tames it—and then when I take the braids out, it's got this wave. And if I'm feeling really lazy, I'll just sleep in the braids and then wear them the next day, too!

Have you ever consider straying from your signature red color?

I haven't. I've never dyed my hair, and my color is 100 percent natural. I've done a wash-out gloss before, but only a clear one! I definitely bought a weird wig in Tokyo once, though, that was sort of a brunette Dorothy Hamill cut—but when I looked in the mirror I didn't recognize myself at all and immediately took it off.

Was it for a costume party or something?

I mean, my whole life is like a costume party!

Valid point. Who are some of your own personal style heroes, either in the music industry or Hollywood in general?

Patti Smith, for sure. And growing up, I played Lucille Ball's granddaughter on a very short-lived TV show [*Life With Lucy*], and I just remember her being so put together. Everything matched. I think I've got a bit of a grandma style going on in my personal life—you know, where the bag matches the shoes and sunglasses—and I think that might've come from her.

Finally, I have to bring up *Troop Beverly Hills* for a moment, since our entire office is obsessed with that movie. Have you stayed in touch with any of the rest of the cast since filming?

No, never—although I've bumped into Kellie Martin at Tracy Anderson, where we both work out! But aside from that, no—I haven't seen most of those women in, what, 25 years?

I can't believe it's been that long.

I know, it really struck a chord with women somehow. And I don't know if you know this, but at the time it was released, it was a huge flop. Like, it got terrible reviews, it flopped at the box office—and then, I don't know, it just gained this incredible cult following over the years.

If you were part of a real-life Wilderness Girl troop, what badge would you be most likely to earn?

Probably "Most Serious Person In the Room." I'm very serious when I'm working!

<http://www.luckymag.com/style/2014/07/jenny-lewis-interview>