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Soul Sisters Podcast: Joan Osborne Leaves Behind 'One of Us' to Find the 'Sass' and 'Swagger' of Her Authentic Self



When [Joan Osborne](#) became an overnight sensation with her ubiquitous hit “One of Us” in 1995, no one was less prepared than her.

“On the one hand I was really excited to get that kind of recognition,” she says on this episode of *Soul Sisters*, while admitting that “it was also really difficult just personally” with strangers following her down the street after recognizing her from the song’s music video that played in heavy MTV rotation. (“I’d be in the deli just trying to buy tampons...!”)

[Soul Sisters Podcast: Aoife O'Donovan Talks New Album, Going From Crooked Still to Standing Solo](#)

Revvng up for her first-ever stint at the [Café Carlyle](#) this month, where she’s performing the songs of [Bob Dylan](#) (she also performs two songs from her set in this episode, recorded at New York's Chord Club), Osborne looks back at a life that began in small-town Kentucky, where she harbored the unexpected dream of becoming a Catholic priest, before running off to New York to study documentary filmmaking (“It was like landing on another planet”), and then accepting a dare that would completely turn her life upside down.

<http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/podcasts/7256306/soul-sisters-podcast-joan-osborne>

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At a blues open mic during college one night her friend told her, "I dare you to go up and sing a song with this guy. If you do that I'll buy the drinks." Osborne tells us getting onstage to sing [Billie Holiday](#) suddenly put her in touch with "a cool way of being a female in the world, to have all this sass and this attitude."

"There was something about it that let me get in touch with my physicality and even sensuality," she says. "Just to have that kind of confidence and that kind of swagger, I was like, 'I want to be that.' And I wasn't that, but I was very attracted to it."

[Soul Sisters Podcast: Indigo Girls on The 'Left-Wing, Bleeding Heart Women' Label](#)

Cut to several years later when her debut album *Relish* would be nominated for seven Grammy's - a level of success she would not be able to repeat with subsequent efforts. "I was the poster child for the sophomore slump," she admits. "I think I messed myself up just mentally with that kind of pressure."

Now she's enjoying the kind of career that fans of her anomalous pop hit may not have expected, but that anyone familiar with her deep bonafides in blues and Motown are loyally following. "You can do the thing that everybody is rushing to and wants from you," she warns, "or you can be your authentic self. And that's gonna draw the people to you that will stay with you."

Check out the full episode, including a live performance, below, hosted by *Billboard* writer/content creator Jessie Katz, and be sure to [subscribe to our iTunes channel](#) for all future episodes:

