

Bangs & Velcro: Recreating the Magic ✨

One day in 2023, we set out on a mission: to return to the very same bench—wearing the very same windbreakers and turtlenecks and sneakers—that we sat on decades ago in the early years of our friendship. The result? Hilarity. Read on for the real-life LinkedIn Q&A that followed.



Q: Which one is the original?

KO: Ah yes, it's tough to tell. But it's the one where KK's legs aren't so squished up on the bench. (My posture has remained alarmingly similar.)

Q: Wait, you have bangs???

KO: I know, I know, they are VERY convincing. But they're actually just clip-in bangs!*

Q: Where do you suppose the lady in the trench coat went?

KK: I fear she might have been scared away forever by my young, ghostly face 🧛‍♀️

Q: Will these outfits be up for auction?

KO: I can't speak for KK's outfit but my jacket has already been claimed. The Curves are still up for grabs though! 🖊️

KK: Auction?! No way! This is my daily work uniform! (Though if anyone's in the market for Izumi size 43 (EUR) white clip-in bike shoes—with THREE velcro straps—they're yours!)

Q: Haters will say it's AI.

KO: Look at the accuracy of the hand and finger placement! No way Midjourney could make something like this.

Q: I had no idea your history together went so far back! What's changed the most about the "other" Karen? What's stayed exactly the same?

KK: Welllllll, fun fact: In our youthful years, the "other" Karen was primarily the writer, while I was primarily the drawer. Our roles have since switched—though KO's still no slouch with the prose!

KO: I'd say what's changed the most about KK over our 35-year history is her location! From Philly to Africa to Grenada to San Diego to DC—she can't stay still! But what hasn't changed is our ability to make each other laugh until we can't breathe. (See photo above.)

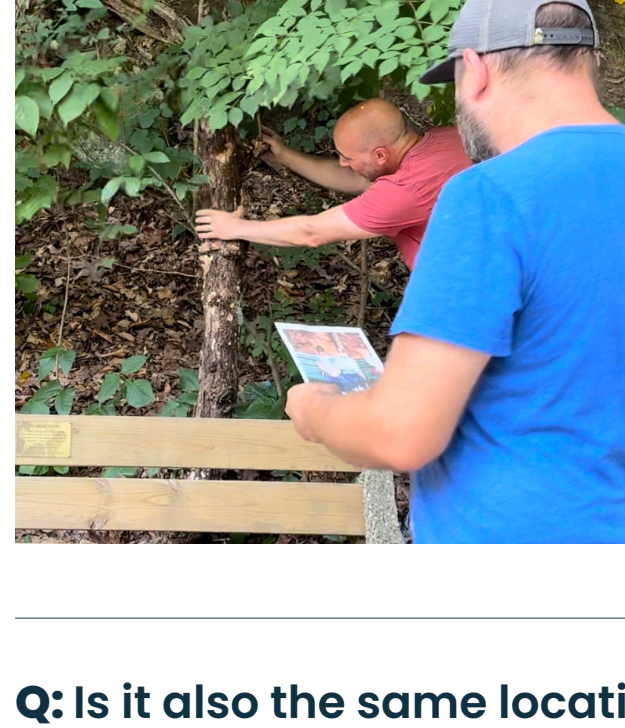
Q: I'm having a Mandela Effect moment...do ya'll remember those gloves that had designs appear when they got cold? Were they called Freezy Freakies or Freaky Freezies?

KO: I remember them! But I don't remember the name. All I know is I had a pair with penguins on them and they were awesome.

Q: That tree behind you looks pretty rotted. Were you aware that it could have fallen on you while sitting on the bench?

KK: To realize one's creative dreams, some risks are worth taking. 😊

KO: Luckily, it wasn't actually a tree! It was a log held in place for the shot. Fooled you!



Q: Is it also the same location?

KO: Sadly, no. The original shot was taken on a field trip to the Philadelphia Zoo but after some online sleuthing, we realized the benches were no longer there. We shot this in Wissahickon Valley Park instead.

Q: Why are Curves only marketed toward women? I tried those suckers on and they were only half as uncomfortable as they look.

KO: Call dibs on them and they're all yours!

Q: Inspirational! What advice do you have for those interested in a career in modeling? Clearly you are both naturals.

KO: I'd encourage people to tap into their own personal experiences for emotional inspiration in front of the camera. For instance, for this assignment I was really trying to channel my inner "MOM! Stop taking my picture!!! You're embarrassing me in front of all of my friends! I knew I should have never let you chaperone this field trip!!!!!" vibe. Curious to hear KK's advice!

KK: 100%, KO. And also, sometimes less is more? I think forgoing the white clown paint in an attempt to match my younger self's pasty skin tone was definitely the right call.

Q: Long time viewer, first time commenter. This question is for either Karen: I'm a sucker for a good, old school windbreaker. Do either of you rock the 90's windbreaker on the reg, or was this a one-and-done occasion? If the answer is no to the former, WILL YOU RECONSIDER??

KO: Always great to hear from one of our fans! For me, this was a one-and-done windbreaker wearing experience. But I'm not gonna lie, all of this positive feedback might make me reconsider! 😊

KK: Had I been lucky enough to find an actual pale blue windbreaker rather than a knee-length rain jacket that required some artful folding, I would absolutely enter it into my fall outerwear rotation!

Q: Awwww she got the velcro!

KK: Yes, indeed! My thrift store hunt led me to a difficult decision: high tops with laces or low tops with velcro. I went with the latter and have zero regrets!

Q: How do you stay looking so young?

KO: Timeless fashion choices and a hair piece! KK, what are your secrets?

KK: For me, the key is redirecting the onlooker's eye from, say, one's graying head of hair to, say, a classic black turtleneck that surprises and delights (in this case, by creating the illusion of a floating head!). In one word: trickery.

Q: The bench in question seems to be shrinking over time? Might consider an alternative protective wood stain. Fashion never fades.

KO: Good point. At this rate, it'll never be able to hold us for our 70-year reenactment photo.

Q: Why did you photoshop me out of both photos?

KO: I was hoping you wouldn't notice! 😊😊😊

Q: Do you both still keep in touch with the woman on the other bench in the first photo? How is she doing these days?

KK: Sadly not. You know how it goes: One moment, disparate lives converge so beautifully on two neighboring zoo benches; the next, they part ways—some in the direction of freeze tag and fort-building; another towards a future of designing trench coats for Macy's (or so I'd like to imagine). Alas, we bid her well.

Q: I want to give my kids this haircut. Any tips?

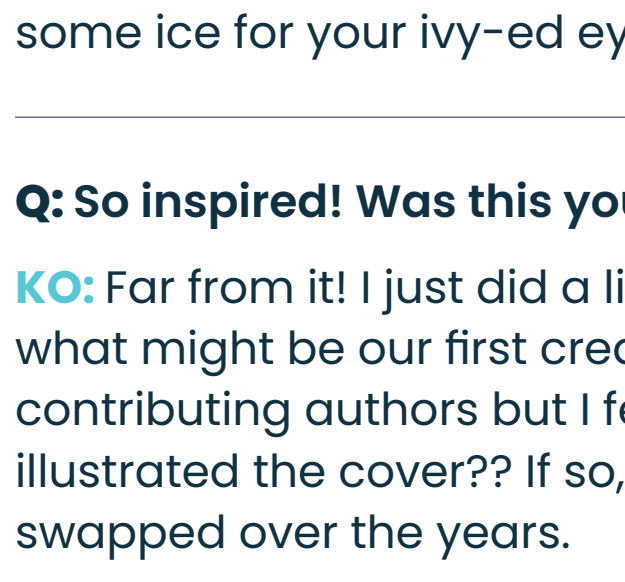
KO: Boy, do I have some great news for you: there's no cutting required! [Just buy these!](#)

Q: Is that poison ivy behind you in the second photo? Seems dangerous. I had a friend who got poison ivy on her eyeballs from just looking at it. She had to ice her ivy-ed eyes. Isn't that scary? Am I at risk of getting it for looking at this? I'm afraid my eyes might freeze if I have to ice them. What should I do?

KO: YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO LOOK AT THAT PART!! brb, gotta go get you some ice for your ivy-ed eyeballs.

Q: So inspired! Was this your first creative collaboration?

KO: Far from it! I just did a little digging around and came across what might be our first creative collaboration ever! We were both contributing authors but I feel like KK may have also designed and illustrated the cover?? If so, it's another example of how our roles have swapped over the years.



KK: Amaaaaaazing, Karen Onorato. I'd recognize that Medusa anywhere!

Q: What's the soundtrack to this photo? For some reason I hear Tears For Fears' "Everybody Wants To Rule The World" but I might be overshooting it.

KO: Ooooo, this is gonna take some thought. Guaranteed KK goes with a Debbie Gibson song.

KK: This is givin' me "The Look" by Roxette.

Q: I could not see your braces. Can you reshoot this photo?

KO: Good point! Although I'm pretty sure I don't have braces in this photo because (get ready for this) I also had a perm when I had braces and those bangs are clearly perm-free.

Q: Please make this into an ongoing photo reenactment series. 🙏

KO: Deal!

*KO actually got bangs in 2025, so she no longer needs the clip-ins.

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