

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover
EPISODE #15 - KNIGHT IN SHINING SEQUINS

Hey y'all, I'm Brooke Hoover. A Louisiana native, actor, writer and comedian. I've lost 100 pounds through diet and exercise or shall I say "lifestyle changes". My twenty year and counting health journey has taught me that just like taking a diet pill for weight loss, body positivity doesn't magically happen overnight. I'm working on re-gaining my self esteem and re-kindling my love affair with Cajun and Southern comfort food in a healthier way all the while juggling eating as clean as I can, re-establishing myself in the entertainment industry which, as we know, is historically fat phobic all the while showing my inner phat girl some love - that's phat with a PH - pretty hot and tempting. Let me tell y'all a tale or two...

Hey y'all, it is Brooke with the Who's Dat Phat Girl podcast and today the episode is called: Knight in Shining Sequins and of course that is a Knight with a K N I G H T. Because that was the mascot of my middle and high school - Episcopal Knights! So, in eighth grade, I was in the pep squad and one of the cheers we would do was (Cheering) Hot Boudin, Cold Cous Cous, Come on Knights, Let's Poosh, Poosh, Poosh. And it always - I guess it was the writer in me (pretentious voice) oh how pretentious - that would always think, "Wow. Cous Cous and Poosh. That's really stretching it." Like Cous Cous, Push, Push, Push. It just didn't work but it was a cute cheer. I had a lot of fun doing pep squad. But, to analyze that cheer even more so if y'all don't know what Boudin is if you're not from Louisiana. If you've had your head under a rock. No I'm kidding.

I don't think a lot of people know what boudin is. So, almost every single person I know back home loves it. I can not stand it. Ew. Because in French boudin means "Blood sausage" and basically what Boudin is, it's in a casing. I don't like anything in a casing. You know? But Boudin is in a casing. I do like Andouille sausage but I'm getting a little side tracked. So, Boudin is in a casing, right? And it's basically meat and rice like the sausage all shoved back up in there. And, I think it can be fried. I'm not 100% sure. Again, I'm not a Boudin expert. But, I do know one of the best places to get Boudin is on -at a road side gas station on the way to Lafayette from Baton Rouge because we would always have to stop there every single time for my mom and my dad to get some Boudin. Oh. And, actually I had never had cous cous in Louisiana until I actually went to France to the south of France to (French accent) Avignon. And, we had it like every night and I loved it and when I came back home, I would make it for Momma. It was just like a nice salad with a lot of lemon and stuff. But, again Cous Cous is nothing but a grain. Nothing but wheat. I know there's a lot of talk, I've even had a lot of talk about wheat and grain and all that stuff (sings from "RENT") Going against the grain. Goin' insane. I just had a "RENT" moment. I am going a little insane.

But, cous cous, I feel like it's something that's not necessarily comfort food for me but it is heart-warming because it always makes me think of France. But, anyways, that cheer, I just totally analyzed and went ADD about a cheer from pep squad.

We're not talking about food today though. We are talking about one of my passions (sing-song voice) costumes.

So, pep squad costume. Everybody was allowed to join. There were no tryouts. So, I was you know the middle school is right when I started getting extra, extra juicy as my friend Natasha and I like to say. But, I was getting heavier and I had a uniform. I mean we all had uniforms. But, I remember, I think Varsity was the manufacturer. I remember one of the pep-squad leaders or teachers or you know those people the adults basically who do pep-squad told my mom privately and on the side, (Whisper) "here's like the extra magazine because Brooke's going to have to get it from the adult, the adult part of the calendar." It's like give me a break. What's the big deal you know? Because, back in the day, plus size really didn't exist and it really didn't exist for 13-14 year olds. If you're a 13 or 14 year old you're not plus size, you're just fat. And not PHAT with a PH. But, at least I was able to get a nice costume if you will, I felt very important. I was very happy about pep-squad because it put all kind of like my dance moves to the test even though you don't really dance a lot in pep-squad you are moving and grooving and pushing that hot cous cous. You're pushing the hot cous cous - nuts you're pushing the cold cous cous and the hot boudin. Mmm...

So, then high school happened. Pep-squad, middle school, eighth grade, it was hunky dory. Oh I never say hunky dory. Like last episode I said golly or gee whiz, geez Louise. I don't really say that stuff. But, it was hunky dory. It was almost idyllic in a way. And, then we hit high school and I had seen way too many John Hughes movies that I thought, I put myself into this box. I said, I must be in a club. I must fit in some how. I must you know have a group. Have a clique, if you will.

And, I already I did theater. But, I never really quite fit into the theater department because I wasn't the best singer. I wasn't really cutesy. I was almost kind of a little too...out of sorts to 110% fit into the theater department. And I wasn't quite bad-ass enough to fit into the cool kids group. But, I was too bad ass to do like choir and again remember, was not a singer back then. And, I was not athletic enough for any intramural sports. But, that did not stop me from trying to fit in. So, one of the things I did to try to fit into a group, some sort of afterschool activity that would define myself, that would define me for the rest of my life, that would at least maybe get me a college scholarship of some sorts, that would make me interesting, that would make me fit in, that would make me have instant friends. Yes, because it works like cake mix. High school's just like cake mix. No.

I really said, "let me go with my dance background" all like ten years of it from being a little kid and I'm going to audition for the High Steppers. So, my best friend Nikki and I, we worked our booties off. The High Steppers are like cheerleaders except they just dance. They dance if you will. They sometimes have pom poms but not always and their pom poms are sparkly. So, that is kind of the difference. And, they had all of these cutesy shiny uniforms. I mean I say cutesy now and in hind sight, they were probably just really expensive tacky stuff. So, Nikki and I were just really

trying hard. We would practice little dance routines, things like that. We would stretch. I would really try to get those splits in. And, one day this girl, her name was Amy; she lived in my neighborhood, White Oak Landing. Heeeeeey. And, she came up to my mom and I at our house. Maybe she was stalking me. I don't know. But, she was a senior. I was like this is so cool, a senior is stalking me? So, she comes up and she's like, "Hey. I saw that you are fixing to audition" oh God I just said "fixing" Well, we know where I'm from, y'all. So, "Hey I just saw you're fixing to audition for the High Steppers in a couple of weeks and I thought maybe I could give you some pointers because I'm a High Steppers." And, I was like this is wonderful. And, Momma was like, "Girl are you sure you have time for us, for little ole us?" And, Amy was like, "Yeah I'm a senior. So, I'm fixing to graduate. So, I have nothing but time." So, cue the 80s movie montage of me and Amy or Amy and I of Amy and me us guhls practicing stretching trying our hearts out to really get me into shape. For high steppers. Oh notice that little pause there cause also I think I was trying to get myself into shape cardiovascularly too. So, the day of high stepper try-outs, Amy comes over and she is driving me there and I give her this - she liked that kind of Vintage Winnie the Pooh - not the cartoony Winnie the Pooh but the more vintagey thing that really regained, resurfaced popularity in the late 90s. I got her all this cutesy Winnie the Pooh stuff from Disney Store and Barnes and Noble and we hugged and yay, Brooke, let's do one little more workout. Let's stretch. Let's dance a little bit and so Momma comes in and she's watching me do my high kicks and you know the kicks are not quite high enough. And, Momma's like, "Brooke. You don't need to do a high kick like that. Do it like that." And, Momma up and ripped her like pants and I think she pulled something in her back. It was a lot funnier to see than it is for me to describe right now. But, so there was that. So, Amy drives us to the us, me, Amy drives me to the high stepper auditions. And like for once Momma wasn't there with me. It was part of me growing up. Part of me getting older. Because, I'm hanging out with a cool senior who likes vintage Winnie the Pooh stuff. So, get there, Best Friend Nikki is there and we are ready because we want to be part of this group that's like cheerleaders but on steroids but they're not really on steroids because they're good guhls and they don't do those kind of - what's the word you use for steroids or things that athletes are not supposed to take when you are in school? Anyways, Nikki and I we start auditioning. We have to learn a dance combo right then and there. So, Melanie teaches us - sorry microphone. I hit the pop filter. So, Melanie teaches us the dance. And, it's to Whip It. Not Whip It Good. But (hums the tune to "Let it Whip") We both are here to add the touch. So let it whip. So it actually wasn't whip it. It's Let it Whip. So, get that straight not DeVo Whip It but Let it Whip. So, I remember only part of the Dance at the end. And, I also was wearing a Guys and Dolls T-shirt because I had just seen the Broadway show that summer so I felt very self important. Working my butt off doing this dance. Go into the audition doing the dance. And, you're in those standard lines right? And, there's this girl and her name is Courtney and she is like dancing like a beast. She is high kicking enough to impress Momma okay? And, she has a leg brace. And I go in and I just do a so-so job. But, I felt really good about it. And, I had worked hard. You know like good things should come to those who work hard.

And, Nikki did a great job. She had worked hard too. She had more of a dancer's body and kind of that look, that lewk that they were going after. So, on Monday we go and we look at the list and looking for our names and of course Courtney got it because that girl is crazy. And, we look some more and Nikki's name's not on there. What? Nikki. And, then, surprise, surprise. My name's not on there either. So, I thought high school is ruined for me because I can't be part of the high steppers. But, I only had a low for a second because I said, you know what? You know what? I'm going to audition for cross country. And, I kept saying "audition". You don't really audition for anything. And, I said, ""The cross country people seem pretty cool. You just run long distances." Cool. And, sometimes you can kind of like walk-jog a little bit maybe. That's what I thought. So, that summer between middle school and high school, I started just walking five miles a day in the mountains of North Carolina where we would go every summer and two of my best friends Arlie and Cora and their, some of their dogs like (Southern accent) Sissy the Beagle, they would join me. I remember Cora and Arlie were walking barefoot. So, those mountain girls, they are tough. But, it was fun. But, I said, (Sighs) It's just like not fun enough for me. Because walking in the beautiful mountains of North Carolina with no heat and humidity is a lot different than walking well jogging, running in the heat and humidity of south Louisiana. So, no thank you. Then, I thought as soon as I start high school freshman year, it was kind of like try-out week and I said, "Oh, wait. One thing I didn't think about was swim team. I really think I would do great because I swim like a fish." Yeah. Right. I had never swam in my life to stay straight in a lane. So, I was never a big swim with the swim cap, swim with goggles. My first time ever to put on a swim cap was at the try-outs when I was 14 years old and Mr. Z and Mr. Z, they were brothers. Mr. Zielinski and Mr. Zielinski. I remember them just looking at me while I was swimming and they were shaking their heads like, "Girl. No. Get out. Get out of this pool." And, that made me a little sad because I really wanted to be part of swim team. But, at least nowadays I have taught myself how to swim in a lane. Still haven't taught myself how to high kick well enough to impress Momma.

So, you might think, "Hey Brooke, you were in pep-squad. Why didn't you just do cheerleading?" Well, good luck me trying to do a hurkie. You had to be able to do a hurkie and all these other sorts of things. And I couldn't even jump a hurdle for the physical fitness challenge you have to do. But, in hindsight, that physical fitness challenge you used to have to do, remember that y'all back in like middle school?

That's how they judged how athletic you were or how wonderful or how worthy you were? And, if you didn't do well, you felt like crap. At least I did. I couldn't even - I think a hurkie actually is a little bit, I would say easier than jumping a hurdle depending on the size of the hurdle. Now, if the hurdle's the size of a turtle, that's pretty easy. Needless to say, cheerleading was out for me.

So, again, I was happy to be part of the theatre department, I was happy. But it just didn't feel like I had quite found my groove, really. I was also involved in the visual arts and that was a lot of fun. And, that was a great way to get out of the heat and the humidity was to go into Ms. Manno's room and do mosaics and artwork during my

free time. But, then I got to thinking....it was my let's see...sophomore year. There was a guy and he looked like - he was Conrad Birdie in "Bye, Bye, Birdie" He looked like the typical guy like the heart throb within an 80's high school movie. I mean not really my type but his name was Sam and dashing type of guy. He was the Knight as in the Mascot the Knight. And, he really looked like a Knight from back in the 1800's. Like he was built for it. And, I was like, "Oh, that's fun. Sam's the Knight. That looks kind of fun." And, then Sam graduates and then next year, the next year happens, it was my junior year, this guy, a senior named Craig kind of a portly fellow if you will and you know I don't like to say portly fellow. And, come on, give me a break, I am or was or are or will be, I'm a bigger person too so give me a break.

So anyways, Craig kind of like a chubby silly dead pan humor kind of guy, he was the mascot my junior year, his senior year. And, all he had to do to get a zillion applause and a zillion laughs was just run straight across like dash straight across with a sword. And, I got to thinking, "That looks kind of like fun." So, senior year comes around and I go and talk to a couple of the guhls who are in the cheerleading department and I'm like, "Guhls, I want to be the Knight. Like how do I become the Knight?" And, they're like, "Oh, Brooke you'd be perfect for it. All you have to do is you get a costume and you just run around at games and get people fired up." And, I'm like do I have to learn any routines? Do I have to audition? Do I have to try out? "No, not at all." So, Momma made me a costume and it was basically like Shiny Lamé Liberace looking number with gold sequins and then middle was that old timey Cross in Navy Blue because those were our colors. And, I just put all my heart, soul and blood, sweat and teen spirit into it. I didn't just run like Craig. I didn't rely on my dead pan humor and funniness to get by. Or like Sam I didn't rely on just my good looks and wonderfulness. He was a wonderful guy. They both were, you know? I just got into it like a crazy person like doing crazy dancing and cheering like (grunts) like beasting and getting into it. And, my Momma actually had a really good idea. My grandpa, Poppee had made a lot of Cypress wood things over the years, furniture. He also made Cypress wood rocking horses and he would tie the rope hair and I remember the hair was so soft. So, Momma was like, "Baby why don't you whip out that rocking horse? Just put in the back of the Jeep" I had a Jeep back in the day "Why don't you just put it in the back of the Jeep and you can bring it to all of the games and ride on that rocking horse and that will sure be funny?" And boy it was.

Because I tell you one time for the homecoming game, I was a little hung-over. I mean sorry to admit it but I guess we start drinking early in Louisiana. So, I was a little post turned up if you will. And, I get my 200 plus pound self in my Knight outfit on the rocking horse at the field. I'm kind of to the sidelines of the field with the cheerleaders and I start you know lassoing and riding that rocking horse and all of a sudden, I just kind of like (makes a fart noise) just keel over and fall over. And, one of the teachers, oddly enough my favorite brother Mr. Z, the blonde haired Mr. Z, he also taught us political science and he was the coach of the swim team that I was not accepted into. He looks at me and I look at him and I could tell that he so badly wanted to laugh at me but I think he kind of felt bad like "Oh gosh. A bigger girl just fell off of her rocking horse." But I thought it was so funny because that rocking

horse was low to the ground. It was funny. I was a little hung-over but also possibly still drunk. Who knows? And, Mr. Z and I make eyes and we just start laughing. And, I realized I had found my place in high school at that homecoming game. It was just to make people laugh. To make a fool of myself. To ride that rocking horse and I couldn't always plan when I would fall off of it but just to do silly things and it didn't matter what size I was and for so long I had told myself you know oh you know well I wasn't accepted into high steppers. I actually just realized this while working on this episode, y'all. I had told myself for I can't I'm not going to do the math right now but, I for nearly almost 25 to 30 years I told myself, (angry frustrated kid voice) I wasn't accepted into high steppers because I'm, I was a chubby kid. Or I couldn't be part of the swim team because I was more like a whale and I couldn't be part of cross country because I had flat feet and I was overweight. And I had told myself for so long I didn't get into any of these things because I was overweight. Because I didn't fit in and I realize now, I didn't get into any of those things because I wasn't quite good. I just wasn't good at it. I wasn't a good enough dancer. And, that's fine. That's what I'm realizing. That is fine. I wasn't a good enough cross country runner. Got bored. That's fine. I wasn't a good enough swim stay in your lane person. But, I was good enough at making a fool of myself, making people laugh and enlisting Momma to make me one kick ass costume. So, that, being able to just go rouge and not join any group in high school is where I really came into my own.

Thanks so much for listening, y'all. It is my hope to inspire, uplift and entertain you with this Who's Dat Phat Girl podcast. So if you're HUNGRY for more, you can book me to speak or perform my solo show that inspired this podcast Phat Girl Costumes written by yours truly and directed by my best bud Brian Lady at your virtual or in person event. Please visit BrookeHoover.com/fluffybuttproductions or email me at contactbrookehoover@gmail.com for more information. And, let's follow each other on instagram - I'm @Br00keH00ver and those O's are not the letter O but they're ZEROS. Not because I want to be a size 0 but because I guess I'm just so clever with my late 90s Yahoo! self

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