

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover
EPISODE #19- The Graduate

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...

I feel like I should start this episode because it's inspired by graduation with that (Brooke hums "Hail to the Chief") wait. Is that the presidential song? You know graduation they usually have a song like a musical song? I sound totally ignorant right now. I am totally ignorant right now. So, we're not going to start off the graduation episode with the music. Insert stock music here in your head if you want. But, the presidential song is in my head for some reason.

Needless to say this episode is inspired by graduation and it's also that time of year that graduation is happening. I'm recording this in late May. I saw a girl, a guhl, last week when I was driving into the city. She was wearing a cap and gown. Well, not really the cap. She was just wearing the gown and heels crossing 9th avenue and 57th street. First of all, I was thinking oh girl how far are you walking in those heels but then it just started really reminding me of graduation. Now, for my high school graduation, we did not wear the gowns. We actually wore different types of gowns because my high school, I guess- it was a very difficult high school as far as subjects and just in general it was a difficult high school about fitting into (Southern accent) Southern perfection if you will. But, for graduation we didn't wear caps and gowns, it was all an aesthetically pleasing graduation because it looked like we were all getting married to each other. The girls, the guhls all had to wear floor length white gowns but not cap and gown but dresses. Like wedding dresses. Like debutante dresses. I was never a debutante. So, I didn't have a debutante dress to reuse or repurpose. And, I was not a young bride. None of the guhls were. I'm not even-- that's not a funny joke. I shouldn't joke about that. That's not funny Brooke.

But, the boys had to wear tuxedos. So, it really did look like we were at some messed up wedding but no we were graduating. However, finding said white dress basically a debutante dress-- I always have to say debutante (deep Southern accent) like that like you're so Southern and fancy. I think my favorite part of any debutante ball is in the latest Borat movie (laughs) when they go to the debutante ball. If you have not seen that, please watch it.

Needless to say, back in South Louisiana, heck, back anywhere, back in the late 90s, there were no long white gowns for me at the ready. There was not a plentiful

abundance of white gowns. So, like usual, we had to have it made for me. Momma usually made my costumes as we all know, but she was like, (Momma's voice) "Baby, I'm not taking on this gown. This is gonna be too difficult. We gotta find someone." So, we found this man named Lester and he lived in this fun-- The Garden District of Louisiana-- of Louisiana? Of Baton Rouge. Back home. This cute little area. So, we go to Lester's house and he's like, "Well honey, do you have a pattern?" I was like, "I don't even know what kind of dress I want." I don't know what to do. I was about 200 pounds at the time. Very, very large cheeks, always red. My cheeks are probably red right now 'cause I was just doing an exercise with one of my YouTube guhls Lari, I love her. She doesn't know me but I love her.

Needless to say, my hair was frizzy. I mean, I was worthy of love. I was worthy of all the good things and I was damn straight worthy enough of having a fabulous dress for my graduation. So, I said, "I really don't know a pattern." And, Momma was like (Momma's voice) "Oh, we didn't even think about that." Momma thought she was failing because Momma was always good with having patterns. My padded bra is in my face.

For those of y'all who are not-- who are listening, not watching, as we know I'm in my closet as always and my bras, my clothing, my scarves is insulation, sound insulation. And, the bra keeps hitting me in the eye. But, yeah so we didn't really have a pattern, we didn't really have an idea. So, I said, "You know what? You know what I really want? I want the dress that Kate Winslet wears in Titanic." And, Lester's like, "Which one honey? I know all of 'em."

And, I was like, "Well, honey, the one she drowns in." I mean wouldn't that look beautiful in all white. Basically what it is, it's like flowy, billowy kind of like peasantry with a sash. That just looks so wonderful. So, we get to town, Lester measures me. I felt very comfortable around him. He was such a nice, nice guy. And Momma goes to town and we start looking and reading up-- the internet is just kind of getting alive and kicking at this point. So, Lester basically made a pattern from watching the movie over and over and my mom-- Momma. I have to call her Momma. Momma did do research online and she couldn't quite find a pattern. She found somebody's like artist rendering that she sent to Lester. But, also there was a warning, "This dress seems light and flowy and billowy." Which is exactly what I wanted, it looked wonderful. I wouldn't sweat my butt off in South Louisiana in May graduating. But, there was fair warning also on the Internet, "But, this dress is deceiving. It can be very heavy." And, Lester and my mom warned me of that.

I said, "No. I don't care. I really, really want this dress." And, I really resonated with Kate Winslet because Kate Winslet though by no means was she the same size as me, she was not super, super skinny. We had all seen at that point super, super skinny guhls on TV and on you know...in the movies. And, Kate Winslet was somebody who looked normal size to me. So, I felt like I related with her. All in all, I really, really wanted this dress. I didn't care if it was heavy. And, I'm thinking, "It can't be heavy. It's billowy." So, needless to say, the time has come for me to go and

try on the dress at Lester's house and it is heavy as all get out y'all. It's beautiful. He did a wonderful job. Wonderful seamstress. But, it is heavy as all get-out.

I said, "I don't care. It is fabulous. Who's gonna have a hand-made dress?" Well, it's because nobody had to have a hand-made dress except for me. But, I had a fabulous hand-made Titanic dress.

Now, in all fairness, the dress looked better in the light blue and the white and the light pink that Kate Winslet had. The all white, it kind of didn't do the dress justice. I wish I could've done different shades of white and Momma and I even debated being rebels and doing a little bit of off-white in there, but my school was very, very adamant about it had to be white as in just paper white. So, graduation rolls around and I actually won an award for the visual and performing arts award. And, I think honestly they made up that award to make me feel good about myself maybe? I don't know why. But, then again how many students were equally devoting much of their time to either performing arts and to visual arts? I was somebody who did that. I mean I didn't really have a social life. Actually, I kind of did. I was a weird rebel nerd.

But, needless to say, I was very proud of this award. I get up in front of all the guhls and their white dresses and the boys in all of their tuxes and all the parents and family members and friends in our chapel, sweating our butts off cause there's no air conditioning in this chapel. And, I go up to receive the award and the dress is so heavy that I topple over and I just fall. And it was just basically like you know we kept joking the Titanic dress, I sank in the Titanic dress. I wish I still had that dress. I think my Momma did donate it to a bride who was on a budget back when she had moved to North Carolina, which is my second home. So, she gave it to somebody there who was like a friend of a friend of a friend or donated it to a place. Because, who's gonna hold on to that? I mean I wasn't getting married any time soon and nowadays for a wedding, I'd want to repurpose the fabric because I'm a big fan of up cycling fabric but I don't think I can wear that dress again. I mean first off, I wouldn't fit into it- I've lost weight since then. But, I don't want to sink again. The Titanic can only sink once, right? Ahhhhh ah.

So, for college, all right so for high school, graduate and there's so many high hopes, right? After graduation. Especially, the younger you are, there's more hope, right? There's so many hopes after high school graduation. Because in my case, I was coming up to the (Pace piquant sauce "New York City?" accent) big city of New York City. And, I was gonna go to college (Long Island accent) On Long Island and I was gonna start my life as a performing arts theater person. After, college graduation, things were a little different.

So, college graduation, I got the gown. I got the traditional black gown and you can wear whatever you want underneath it. You could wear a t-shirt underneath it, you could wear nothin' underneath it, your birthday suit, I wore flip-flops. I wore flip-flops and I have a picture of my best friend Andrea / Ahndrayah and I yelling at our

parents or something cause we were totally hot, totally uncomfortable. She's wearing heels. She's rockin' it. I mean she pulls it off. And, I'm just like whatever I'm wearing flip-flops. Knowing me, I was wearing a t-shirt and shorts underneath because it was hot as hell.

So, needless to say, after college graduation, there was more of a "what do I do with my life now. What. Do. I. Do. With. My. Life." What is next? I know I didn't want a Master's degree. That wasn't my path. We had a good friend growing up, when we would visit them every summer in North Carolina, Tammy. Shout out Tammy. And, Tammy would be like (Tammy's voice) "Brooke, are you gonna be like one of those life time students?"

You know like those people who are always in school. I have several friends who are. Family friends who are. That's great. I said, "No Tammy. No. I'm gonna go to the school of hard knocks." And, I was maybe 10 at the time when I told her this. But, I guess we're all in a constant state of school if we look at it that way.

So, we graduate college and it's kind of like, "What happens to my life?" So, flash forward to now or a couple days ago when I see that girl crossing the street and a gown and her high heels. And, I'm thinking, "Oh man that's awesome. What a great day for her. This is a great day. She has worked towards a goal. She has achieved it. This is awesome. Good for her." Sending her good vibes. And, then I'm thinking, "What the hell happens now? What happens now?" And, then I start to think, "What have I done with my life? What, what has happened to me? You know? What am I really doing?"

And, like Tammy says, I did become a constant student because being in the acting field, you do have to be a constant student because you always have to keep up with your craft, be doing classes, things like that. So, that's great. But, I still feel like - sometimes I worry and I think a lot of people do regardless of what field you're in but especially in a freelance type of field, what am I doing with my life? Am I successful? Am I successful? You know and you play that comparison game with people who aren't in your field really and first of all you can't do that. But, it's also like...if you continue to be a student of life every individual day of your life, you won't wait for this big culmination of graduation.

And, then what? So, there's no big high and there's no big low. So, I also think graduation's kind of like weight loss. We have that thing of "When I lose the weight...I'm going, it's gonna happen. When I graduate magna cum laude it's gonna happen." Or even for my actor friends out there, "When I get my first big break, it's gonna happen." And, that's a very if-then when or when then if type of mentality so it makes the lull days, the lull days, L-U-L-L days seem...extra low because it's like where is that culmination? You know a lot of people say when you lose weight for example, "Oh, things are gonna be great." And, yeah. You know? When I lost weight, I felt great because I achieved a goal that a lot of people, myself included kind of thought was pretty impossible.

I mean losing 100 pounds is pretty tough. I'm not gonna like. It was not easy. It's taken me about 20 years. Like over 20 years. And, I failed more times than I succeeded. You know what I'm saying? And, I think that's what it is about graduation, too. You're seeing one success, you're not seeing all of the failure. Like with acting, a creative field, a freelance field, you're seeing one success not all the failure. And, it's almost like this mentality of you know I'm waiting. Like something miraculous is going to happen when you get to that certain point but you're not enjoying the way to that point on the way.

People always say, "Enjoy the journey, enjoy the journey, enjoy the journey." And, yes that is kind of the theme of today. That is what I'm talking about but it's a little bit more than that. It's setting up goals and achieving them but it's also making yourself realize once you get to that goal, is that what's going to make you happy? The next day that you wake up after you graduate, are you gonna be that much smarter or that much happier or does it happen every little baby step along the way?

And, I know everybody, we're all highly evolved enough to understand how I'm equating this to weight loss right? So, for example, I tend to post pictures of Transformation Tuesday and thank y'all to my friends and my followers and my peeps who like them and look at them and that's wonderful and I'm not knocking any comments anybody's ever made because I don't want to be off-putting or offend anybody by my getting offended. Oh that's so Southern of me, (Southern accent) "I don't want to offend you but I'm offended." Give me a break.

I do get a little bit, I'm just going to say it. I get a little bit ticked off when I post a Transformation Tuesday picture and I'm just doing it to say guys, I achieved a goal that doctors did not believe I could do. Like medical professionals did not believe in me. I love my family. I don't know if my family believed in me, love them. I don't know if they believed in me. Lot of haters definitely didn't believe in me. I kind of believed in myself but not all the time.

But, there's these two pictures of me and people are like, "You look so much healthier here. You look so much happier here. You look so much better. -ier. -ier." Like I.E.R. Like so 'much "er" here. Prettier. Better. Sexier. Worthier. And, it's like no. I achieved a goal that was difficult but I'm not any different. You know? Just kind of like with graduation are you gonna say, "You're smarter?" Or like when you book that acting role are you better? Are you more worthy of your own approval because you got to a certain spot that society says that is to be held up high?

Oy yoy yoy. If we expect miracles to miraculously oh I'm using two words within one thing. If we are constantly in this state of miracles will happen when I get somewhere, we will constantly be disappointed.

Because, we're already there. We are already there. Every single step of the day, we are resetting. And, those goals are kind of along that roller coaster, along that time line of life but it's every day that you get to reset. You know? So, think about this, this is one of my most favorite movies in the world. And, it's "The Graduate" and you know at the very end he's going and Dustin Hoffman's like banging on the church and he rescues her and they're in the car. Sorry they're in the back of the bus and they've escaped. And, they're sitting and they're so excited and then their faces, very last shot, their faces are kind of like, "Now what? Now What?" All of this and now what? Which is kind of, if you've seen the movie it's kind of the whole theme of the movie like I graduated and now what?

So, if we set ourselves up like I'm gonna achieve this goal. I'm gonna lose this weight and things are gonna be perfect, I'm gonna graduate. And, I'm gonna get the perfect job, we're setting ourselves up for nothing but self-deprecation, disappointment and failure. If we keep making success if then when or when then if this kind of mentality, again, we just really have to enjoy the journey because I promise y'all, I promise y'all like every day I sometimes go back and I say, "I want to revisit my day one" oh God. Am I fixing to cry. Here we go.

I want to revisit my day one, right? Think about kindergarten graduation. Which I don't really remember. But, I want to go back to day one of kindergarten where you were just starting. I want to go back to day one of high school. Actually I don't (laughs) That's one day one I don't want to go back to.

I want to go back to day one of college. I want to go back to day one of when my health journey began. Which I couldn't quite put a finger on when that is. Because, the best part is those moments. Moment to moment. Honestly, the best way to be able to revisit all those moments is just to be in the moment now because that will give you the best oh sorry microphone. I just hit the microphone. That will give you the best memory for me. The way I can think and remember things the clearest is when I'm just totally in that moment. So, let's not make graduation or working towards a goal an ending. It is a beginning. But, every day is a beginning. All right? Because, I know for damn straight, while I love the movie "The Graduate"

I don't want my life being like I achieve a goal and then I'm in the back of the bus sitting with a blank stare wondering what the heck happens next. I want to be like good mornin' what happens next? I hope that was not too cheesy. I mean it with all my heart. But, to all the graduates out there, congratulations, now start every day afresh and best of luck.

Thanks for listening y'all. (Bows) I'm like doing Namaste. I feel like we deserve a Namaste today. Namaste. (Brooke bows again)

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 0'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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