

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover
EPISODE #35- HALLOWEEN SAGA - Part 3: ANGEL

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 welcome back to the third installment of this Phat Girl's childhood Halloween saga. It's ever continuing and there are more costume themed tales, of course. BUT for story telling sake this is the last of this particular trilogy. Will Little Brooke be doomed to body shaming, thick pancake clown makeup and self-loathing forever?!?!? Let's see...

INSPIRATIONAL STOCK 90S MUSIC

October 30th, 1998. Senior year of high school. This will be my last "Wear Your Costume to School Day". Maybe, just maybe I should muster up all my strength, go out with a bang and attempt a Halloween costume this one last time. And, Momma Anne, y'all know she's been waiting for this day!

Right now, Baz Luhrmann's "Romeo and Juliet" is pretty popular, where Claire Danes dresses up as that awesome angel with the wings at the masquerade ball, remember? And, Victoria's Secret Angel is really popular too, remember? Momma and I go to Party Paradise, an independently owned party and costume supply store which in the late 90s is the only place in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where you can find birthday candles shaped like private parts. Momma says (say in Momma's voice), "we are going just to browse, baby". Momma wants to see if Party Paradise not to be confused with Party City, has any costumes we might like that we could rent or (gasp) buy in a plastic bag. Secretly I know that if they do, they most likely won't fit me. But, lo and behold, like The Law of Attraction, The Secret and the Baby Jesus are all working together to help us, right at the entrance, we see a sole pair of gigantic white plastic angel wings and a bell dings. I'm going to be an angel. Like, the angel at the top of the Christmas tree type of angel. Pure, simple, robes to cover everything up, all my rolls, my fat, my fear and my shame covered up, that type of angel.

So, Momma buys the angel wings and about 40 white feather boas really jazz up the wings. Cause off the rack ain't good enough for Anne Olivier Hoover. We head home and we go to town hot gluing the boas onto the wings. We spend so much time on the wings that we kind of forget about the white robe / dress that's supposed to cover me all up. Momma's been out of costume making practice for a decade,

remember? We assume it will be really easy to call up the church, where my dad has donated a lot of his time, money and baritone voice in the choir over the years, and go over and borrow a white robe from the choir room. This is the answer to our prayers! Momma calls over and over again. She keeps getting the church voicemail.

We start driving all over Baton Rouge looking for a white robe flowy dress sort of thing. Now, mind you, this is before plus size really became accepted or, hell, even really known. So it was insanely difficult finding a white dress because I'd blimped up to the size of a Macy's Thanksgiving Day balloon (there's that self deprecation y'all)...or a dress size 22.

Let me tell y'all exactly how impossible it was to find a white dress for a size 22 girl in the suburbs of Louisiana in October in 1999. Six months after Halloween for our high school graduation, the boys had to wear tuxes and the girls had to wear floor length white gowns. All the skinny girls just wore their dresses from their debutante balls. Surprise, surprise, I wasn't a debutante. So, I had to have my white graduation gown specially made by a fabulous man named Lester. And if y'all want to hear more about THIS particular tale that's in episode #19 "The Graduate".

It's not my friends dressed as California Raisins, it's not the clown school escapade at the Shrine Circus, or years of duct taping my second boobs before dance class that tell me how different being a fat kid is. It is this, spending five hours with my momma driving from store to store just trying to find a damn simple dress that I can fit into.

Just when I start debating borrowing my dad's Shrine Circus Clown costume to go as the tramp clown I deserve to be, Momma says, "Baby, why don't we just go to the big lady store?" Now, mind y'all, Big and Tall for men is okay but "big and lady" should never be combined in the same sentence. It's the first time Momma has said I'm big. She's always kindly and maybe passively aggressively and definitely cluelessly skirted the issue that I'm a blimp...to my face. I've heard the doctor's appointment whispers- which are NOT as melodic as George Michael's "Careless Whispers". Big lady stores don't really exist aside from Lane Bryant and that just equals sheer embarrassment because that means admitting and succumbing to the fact that I'm a big lady. And, they aren't going to have the kind of risqué outfit I want at Lane Bryant. Cause, back in the day, the day of October 30th 1999 to be exact, Lane Bryant just provides wardrobe for women who work in HR, the organ lady at church and Cameron Manheim's character on The Practice. And, this is well before TORRID. If you don't know what TORRID is, Google it.

See, I got so hung up on costumes that we didn't even discuss my regular clothing shopping. On a given school day, I wear my uniform - this navy and blue checked thing, on regular "farting around" days, I wear my dad's old t-shirts or for more special occasions, I shop at those mail order catalogues - y'all remember those? Well now you just go to the website. But A few of those stores have "extended sizes" such as LL Bean, Newport News and Delia's. God bless them. But, it's too late for

Delia's. IT IS TOO DAMN LATE FOR DELIA'S. We get on I-10 and after about 20 minutes end up at a Shopping Center, Hammond Air Plaza and in front of a store called Boutique Destinée. A big lady store like none other. And by none other I mean NOT like the corporate, autumnal colored let me sit in the back cubicle which trend a la mode at Lane Bryant. Not quite sure how my momma knew about this store because she was not technically a big lady herself. BIG PERSONALITY for sure.

We peruse the leopard print, the leather and lace. Everything about this store screams : You better strut your stuff, I am woman hear me roar all up in my face. Surrounding me. Pounding my head like a migraine headache of SEXY. I'm encircled by polyester blend tops that hug and flow in all the right places. Sequins, see through, shimmery everything. Except, the closest thing we find to the flowy white robe dress I'm envisioning is a sparkly glittery silver night-gown thing and it is actually more dark silver than white silver, in the world of silver, that is. It is NOT the color I had planned at all. It will not go with my gorgeous white innocent angel wings. Despite its muumuu shape, the fabric and overall vibe of this dress are too sexy for this girl. Too sexy for this big girl. (a la Right Said Fred.)

Momma can probably tell that I am about to lose it and then it hits her. Quick pause, y'all, a week prior I'd gotten drunk and catapulted my 225 pound self from a brick fountain and sprained my ankle something fierce. (I should pause right here and mention that underage drinking is NOT GOOD) But, it was the 90's in South Louisiana. Teenage Brooke loved nothing more than getting tipsy at parties and doing these insane jumps that an overweight person with skinny legs should never attempt. Momma looks at my ankle which is wrapped in an ACE bandage and back at the dark silver muumuu and the wheels are turning. It's almost like she's talking in tongues, "fallen angel...I'm seeing it...fallen angel...Yes, I got it, baby! You will be the FALLEN angel! Because you FELL! And THAT is why, baby, you are wearing a dark silver dress instead of a white robe! Because you are the angel of HELL!"

To humor Momma and our new friends at Boutique Destinée, I go into the dressing room as La Bouche's "Be My Lover" booms on the speakers. I easily throw the dress on with even some room to breathe. Whoa, that's a first. Boutique Destinée, a girl could get used to ya. I pull back the zebra velvet curtain and I reveal myself in all my muumuuified glory. "Well, baby what do you think? Do you like it?" Momma rubs her rosary beads and waits for my reaction. The sales ladies peak around the dressing room area in anticipation.

"I guess."

Momma and the ladies of Boutique Destinée start jumping around like those mice and birds in Disney's "Cinderella". They try their darndest to convince me I will look beautiful. And, that I'll be making a statement and a pun at the same time (with my sprained ankle and all, get it? Fallen Angel?). I'm a sucker for making statements. And, I can't go on living like a sad clown for the rest of my life. I look around the store and notice that these plus sized clothes are really funky and bright and

sparkly. There is no apologizing for being big at Boutique Destinée. One of the Boutique Destinée ladies screams, "Girl! You look phat!" (Dead Silence.) Seeing the look on my face, the lady says, "Phat with a P-H ! Pretty Hot AND Tempting!"

Momma pays for the silver muumuu and a pair of glittery tights. Then, we stop at Michael's arts and crafts store which is also located in the magical Hammond Air Plaza. We pick up silver star garland (for a halo) and spray paint and lots and lots of glitter. It is 9pm and that is officially late on my momma's costume making time clock. Normally we would have already done a dress rehearsal for the Pomeranians and be in bed right now watching "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown".

Visualize our costume making montage set to the tunes of C&C Music Factory, Sade and Haddaway "What is Love...don't hurt me...no more.". Much of our time is spent spray painting the beautiful white angelic wings and going over them with glitter to make the fallen angel look extra fallen. Two hours and eight minutes later, the fallen angel costume is complete. Momma and I, covered in spray paint, glitter and glue step back and admire our piece de resistance. It looks like Baz Luhrman and a drag queen had a baby my Pomeranians delivered and Momma made into my costume.

I can't sleep that night. Probably the nerves. My acting coach one told me our bodies can't tell the difference between nervousness and excitement. So, I guess I'm excited. I'm so excited. I'm so - I'm so - we won't go there. I haven't been this excited about Halloween in ten years since 1988: The Year of the Sexy Harem Girl Costume.

The next morning, I park my old Jeep Cherokee in the high school parking lot and see some half ass costumes getting out of their cars. Because we're seniors in high school and supposed to be "over it", no one, not even the theatre geeks have gone to as extreme measures as I have. I run into my BFF, who's dressed up as Where's Waldo of the Where's Waldo books. It's hard to find her, at first. She tells me I look amazing and she appreciates the fallen angel pun so much. I want to say, "Nah, I don't look that good. It was nothing." But, instead I remember what that lady said last night, "Girl, PHAT with a PH. Pretty Hot and Tempting!"

I am thanking Momma in my head - and I hear her voice saying, "Momma is always right, baby." (Momma's voice of course). Students and teachers and students dressed as teachers are staring at me and double taking. I go to a religious school, appropriately named Episcopal High School. They just can not believe that class clown, not to be confused with Sassy the Sad Clown, Brooke Hoover, actually has a sexy side. Either that, or they're staring at me because they think I'm going to Hell. So now, I don't know if they're staring at me because I'm dressed as one of Satan's angels, because I'm fat, because I look sexy or because I'm giving off the vibe of I don't give a FART. NOISE. Regardless, y'all, the ball is now in my court.

So y'all this ends the Halloween costume trilogy of Little (not so Little) Brooke but learning body confidence through costumes continues in college and now as an actor out here in the "real world". This fallen angel costume didn't magically make

me 110 percent confident in my body. As we know after losing 100 pounds, I still have body hang ups. But I know I can ALWAYS go back to this moment in my life to remember my inner Phat Girl.

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

And, if you like this podcast, please give me a five star rating and write a review on Apple Podcasts and, please, most importantly, share with your friends, family and other people you may know who are as phat as we are - that's phat with a PH.

©2022 Brooke Hoover Who's Dat Phat Girl