

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover **EPISODE #39- Hairfree for the Holidays**

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...

Oh there's nothing like hair free for the holidays. I know, I know, I know it may sound weird that I'm inspired to talk about hair removal at the top of the holiday season but first off, Christmas isn't usually a favorite holiday for children of divorce and second off, some of my most memorable and fun Christmases have involved hair removal or epilation if we want to use a fancy word. Which, it's the holidays, so let's be fancy, yeah?

Travel back with me to Christmas of 2003. Oh that rhymed. Now, my Momma is a Catholic reject meaning she was excommunicated from the Catholic Church twice so she never really made me go to church though she still taught me to know and love Mr. Baby Jesus, to celebrate his birthday and to celebrate his re-birthday even more but to also choose my own spiritual path. So, when we went to 5pm Catholic Mass with my aunt and uncle at their church at the time, St. Jean Vianney in South Baton Rouge which also happened to be where I went to daycare as a child and hid underneath the jungle gym, I felt traumatized, triggered and ticked off in more ways than one. I always associated church with having to wear itchy restricting clothes including a bra and to fit into societal norms and I felt even more judged in a Catholic church since my mom was basically Mary Magdalene to them for getting two divorces.

But, the one saving grace about 5pm Catholic church mass is that it's super short because the priest must want to end it quickly so he can get his feast on before Midnight Mass. And, my uncle must have picked up on me not feeling so joyous at the most joyous time of the year and knowing that young 20's Brooke, much like teenage Brooke and current mid-life crisis Brooke loves nothing more than picking, prodding and pulling hair out of places where the beauty police says hair should not grow, he suggests we go to Walgreen's (one of the only stores open) and buy some Nads because he wants some of his back hair removed and he knows I'll be the only one to do a good job at it.

Do y'all remember Nads? Why the name Nads though? I mean of all things. I know they're Australian and maybe they don't like have the same terms that we do for things but come ON why did they have to name hair removal strips using a slang

term for a male's private bits !?!? Oh, those Aussies. I gotta love them.

So, we get home to my aunt and uncle's house and we all watch as my uncle takes off his church shirt to reveal a back that really isn't hairy. I mean, he has some patches of hair but it's nothing like my dad who is like a Woolly Mammoth. I slap on one Nads strip very strategically onto my uncle's back as my momma, my aunt and my little cousins watch - side bar - my whole family loves picking and popping and plucking. And, I rip it off perfectly like in the Nads infomercial - but then, like the infomercial, I use the same strip of wax - **because you can use the same strip up to five times so it's eco friendly, mates. And, I slap the somewhat hairy strip on to another area of hair and...**nothing comes off. Because you really do have to start with a fresh strip every time. 2003 was a very hairy - hair free Christmas, indeed.

And, I'm glad I learned that about not reusing the strip early on in my waxing forays because flash forward nearly twenty years to New Years Eve 2017, the night before Harry and I leave for one of our first real trips ever as a couple to Punta Cana in DR. My dad also flies out back to Louisiana around the same time as us early the next morning so to double down on family time and to get my wax on, I put on a pair of short shorts and start waxing my legs as my dad, Harry and I listen to Christmas Carols. This might sound odd to many but I take it as a very grateful moment because twenty years ago, my dad and I weren't even talking at Christmas time or any time. And now I'm showing him my hairy wax strips while Mariah Carey and Bing Crosby serenade us in the background.

But these aren't two isolated events where family and friends have been involved in my hair removal, y'all. My very first attempt at hair removal was when I was about 12 years old and Seventeen magazine and society told me that it was about damn time I remove the hair on my legs - mind y'all it was somewhat nonexistent and blonde. But, I was afraid of razors because blood and all that jazz make me squeamish. I had even tried those circular razors - do y'all remember those - they were circular with pink or green in the middle and you shifted them out every time you wanted a new blade and like five blades or so lived within the circle? They were supposed to be safer for you but really they were just double or maybe triple blade at best packaged within the least eco friendly container you can think of. And, the whole thing was disposable. I mean, that was how we tried to be eco friendly in the 90s.

So, Momma said she'd help me wax them because I was too afraid and it was too damn expensive to go to a salon. So, do y'all remember the wax in the pot that you heat up and then you use those cloth strips? That's what we got. Those pre-waxed rub to heat Nads and Sally Hansen strips came much after these kind because this old school at home wax either just stuck on your or ripped your whole skin off because no one has the dexterity of an aesthetician, really. But, I remember for some reason telling my two friends Kyle and William I was going to do it and they were like, "Oh we want to watch." So, my two pals and I head up to my mom and dad's bathroom while Momma microwaves the tub o' wax downstairs in the kitchen. She

comes upstairs, blowing on the smoking wax pot, slaps it onto my leg and I just start panicking. I tell her not to put a strip on, not to rip it off. And, that wax was stuck - stuck on you, Lionel Richie - stuck on me for a good week or so, sticking to my clothes, not coming off. I thought I was going to impress my friends with how brave I was but instead, I just looked like a hairy coward.

Just as soon as I was getting over my leg waxing woes and starting to use the non eco friendly eco friendly circular razor because it was actually fun to use, I started to notice another problem with unwanted hair that was so much worse than just leg hair. Facial Hair. I had beyond hit puberty and I presume this is when my Polycystic Ovary Syndrome was coming into full effect. Because, I developed side burns. And hairs on my chin and neck. Kind of a mustache too but it wasn't a mustache in full effect just more like random weeds of hairs. People don't realize this about blondes y'all or dirty blondes - while our hair may be blonde, it's coarse and we can be hairy beasts and I don't just mean peach fuzz.

Embarrassing doesn't even begin to describe it and I had to get over myself and my fears of wax and go to a professional - a salon called Lockworks back home to get allllll my hair on my face waxed. I ran into a guhl who went to my school who was coming out of the waxing area and I thought she would be embarrassed too but she seemed to wear her bright ride shiny mustache like a badge of honor as she marched out.

Momma and I heard about a new thing on the radio called laser hair removal that for some reason all the Optometrists offices were doing right around senior year of high school which was perfect timing because this was right around the time a so called friend of mine was getting clever imitating those Adam Sandler movies and started calling me "Side Burn Lady." The thing about laser hair removal is this, though y'all. At least at the time it was happening to me in the late 90s, it was super expensive. It was super painful. And, it came with a LOT of difficult rules to follow. Meaning, you had to have the right unwanted hair color (blonde and coarse? Laser won't read that), you couldn't go out in the sun and your unwanted hair had to be a certain length. So, there was no way I could wax it and then go get it lasered magically. You had to let the hair grow.

And, you had to go back at least like six times all within a given period. Well, that given period also happened to be around the time I was starting college...up in New York.

So, Freshman year of college I flew down to Louisiana, had my cousin pick me up at the airport, getting the numbing cream my cousin had gotten me at the pharmacy - bless her - rubbing on the numbing cream and slapping Saran Wrap all over my cheeks, neck and mustache with a mouth hole cut out to breathe and eat a snow-ball of course while we drove from the New Orleans airport to the laser hair removal clinic in Baton Rouge.

I also remember arriving and the laser hair removal lady telling me I had allowed

the hair to get too long and she shaved my face, causing me to bleed in areas, right before she lasered me. I had tears rolling down my face as I prayed I would be forever hairless and therefore carefree and beautiful.

Well, the good news about the laser y'all, it worked...on my side burns. Then, about four years later, I noticed some of these kind of straggly wiry hairs coming back on my neck and out of my chin mole. Like textbook witchy. Harry my boyfriend was taught by nuns and he's equally angered and terrified by them and he always talks about a nun who taught him who had a big mole and a huge hair coming out of it. Probably like the principal in Uncle Buck. And, I tell Harry, "But that's me. I have hairs coming out of my mole." (I just remove them constantly.)

Aside from expensive laser treatments, I've also tried a plethora of other things. Hair removal cream. Nope. It burns and creates stubble and in grown hairs. Bleaching. Nope it burns and it causes zits and pimples. This slinky thing - nope that will kill you if you don't do it correctly. And an at home laser system - nope doesn't work and thank God Bed, Bath and Beyond has a good return policy because I returned it after I used it about 15 times. Sorry not sorry. Why? I have spent SO much money to the hair removal industry it isn't even funny. Or actually it IS funny. I hope it's funny. Because, that's why I chose to do a whole long podcast episode about it right y'all?

What I have done nowadays for hair removal, I let my leg hair grow. I don't really give a damn. Not many people see my bare legs for like 8 months out of the year. I apologize to my acupuncturists when they have to do needles on my legs. Harry loves me regardless. And, it makes my Pomeranians feel like I'm truly their kindred spirit or maybe the Cajun werewolf the Rugaru. I wax my leg hair at strategic times myself using a new strip every time otherwise it doesn't work or it creates red bumps. And, then I'm good for a month.

For my facial hair removal, again, that laser really did last permanently but only up to the 75 percent it promised. So, now I get electrolysis which if y'all don't know what it is, it's a needle that goes into your hair root with a current of electricity and then the electrologist pulls it out with a tweezer because it is supposed to eventually catch the hair in the growth cycle and tell it to grow finer or less. Like laser hair removal, for electrolysis it also has to be at a certain length and sometimes I'll just use tiny cuticle scissors to cut the hair down if I have to buy time before I go to see my electrologist. The other night while doing it near my mole, I sliced the damn thing with the scissors. So, that can't be good.

Electrolysis for me is by far the most painful, but I've seen somewhat of an improvement. And, as a manicurist once told my mom and I as she made our cuticles burn and bleed, "pain is beauty". But, I also noticed that wearing a mask helps with facial hair growth. Not just masking the hair but also making the hair not grow back as much. I think that's what happens with senior citizens and the hair on their legs or shiny shins as my buddy Harvey calls it - it's like the friction just makes it not grow. Why is it that at the time when you're finally losing unwanted leg hair that's

usually the time that you're losing the wanted hair on your head? Why is it that when you're a female with hormonal issues, you have the ability to grow hair on your face and lose it on your head at the same time? Why is it that I can't feel sexy unless I feel as hairless and shiny as Flipper ?!?!

That is my goal y'all. To be as hairfree and therefore carefree as a damn porpoise in the wild - not at a vacation resort of course - but due to nature and genetics and despite taking spearmint supplements, being completely hair free is unattainable. And, it's living up to something that is expected of us, especially as those of us who are female identifying. But, even men, as we know with my uncle, don't want to be too hairy too. I mean I guess some men like it but even as I gripe about the woes of hair removal and how unfair it is, I thank my lucky stars daily for Harry and his nearly hair free self. I want a chia pet in my windowsill. I don't want to date one.

So what is it? Is it society? I'm sure it is. Those hairfree and carefree commercials and infomercials and messages are all over the place. I mean The Who wears short shorts ad is probably one of the most iconic commercial jingles and yes we have Bob Gaudio to thank for that Oh What a Night. And, I have Jersey Boys the musical to thank for that tidbit of American History. But, there's something to be said about this all encompassing beauty industry and beauty standard that society pushes on us and then that we push on ourselves. It's a trap. But, yet, having the unwanted hair itself, for me at least, is a trap, too.

I'm not going to end this episode telling us to let our unwanted hair grow because I sure as hell won't unless it's on my legs in winter time. I just will leave this saying let's constantly re-evaluate how we tell ourselves what real beauty is. It isn't just skin deep or root of the unwanted hair deep. Hair removal is something we do. Hair growth is something we experience. Hair loss is too. I know there's the other side of that coin, too, y'all. I won't even begin to talk like I am knowledgeable about hair loss from chemotherapy. I can only deeply empathize. But, hair growth or hair loss has so much significance that it's often hard to shake it. I just keep encouraging myself and all of us to look at hair as just the dead cells that it really is and to try to look for our beauty beyond all of that. And as we enter this holiday season, at least here in the Western Hemisphere, let's be grateful that maybe we can cover up that unwanted hair with some long sleeved shirts, pants or leggings and strategically placed neck scarves, word?

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.

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