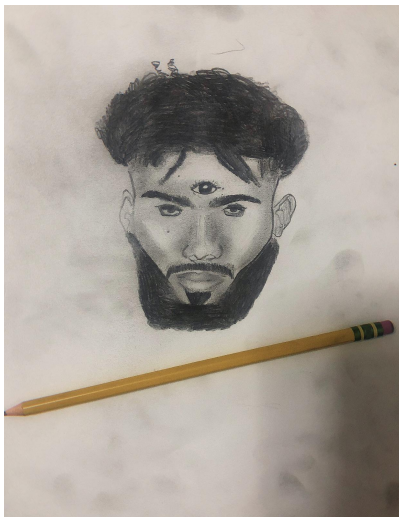
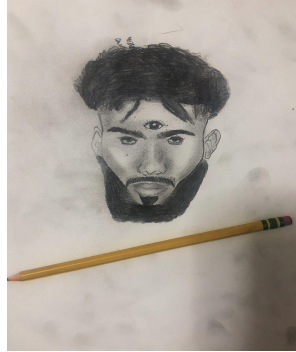


# *Life, Love, and How I Dress*



Written and Illustrated by  
***Brandon Coreas***

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## **Prologue**

Throughout the years of my life, I've gone through various phases of dress and each one was a testament to my overall growth as a man. Each of these items of clothing represents points in my life that I feel have shaped me and helped me become the man I am today. Although life is filled with twists and turns, bumps and bruises I can live and learn. My dress is representative of who I am as an individual and I will never neglect my passion for dress. The details within this book reveal the truths about my life, my love, and how I dress.

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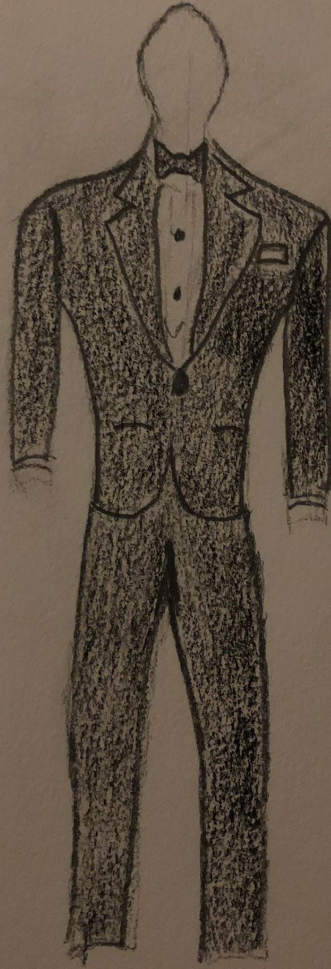
## **The Classic Tux**

It was eighth grade prom night for my Middle School IS 131 and I had to make a statement. I was 14 years old and barely weighed 100 pounds but nonetheless, I knew If I looked good I would feel good. I especially wanted to impress my date at the time so I knew I had to be confident and charming. The prom was held in a nearby facility called Educational Alliance which had a ballroom and a balcony. I remember the flashes of iPhone cameras as we stepped out of the SUV it felt like we were celebrities.

A classic black tux by Vera Wang bought from Men's Warehouse was the perfect look and feel I was going for. The classic sleek black notched lapel jacket and trousers with a white dress shirt and matching suspenders gave me the mature look I was going for. The black bowtie compliments the entire look by indicating that it is for a formal occasion. It was my first time wearing suspenders to hold my pants up instead of a belt but to me, it looked more aesthetically pleasing.

This tuxedo gave me the confidence I needed on this day to be able to enjoy myself and take on the night. Initially, I was extremely nervous because I didn't want to look foolish in front of my date but as soon as I put everything on I felt like I could take on the world. It gave me a sense of protection as well as a stable mind going into everything that day. I was oozing with confidence with every step I took and every word I spoke, and I owe that to how my clothes made me feel that night. Since that day I had a newfound appreciation for formal wear.

Classic Tux



## **The Year of the Beard**

It was the beginning of my senior year in high school and I didn't have much facial hair, maybe a light goatee at most. I had always wanted a beard because I just thought it would look cool on me not knowing it would change how I look completely almost as if I was a different person. As time began to pass I became more invested in wanting to grow my beard. Every day I found myself looking in the mirror hoping to find new strands of hair on my face. Obviously, I wasn't going to grow a beard overnight so I had to wait through many awkward phases of extremely bushy sideburns. Ultimately by the end of my senior year, my beard had finally connected, it wasn't very thick but nonetheless, it was visible so to me that's all that mattered.

Growing a beard meant that I would now appear to look older than my actual age. Aesthetically my face looked fuller because I was fairly slim so the beard added more shape to my face and accentuated my jawline. Not only did it do those things to enhance the look of my face but it also worked like a mask to hide some of my pimples that would appear on my cheek during the time. Overall this meant my identity was beginning to change in terms of the way I was perceived because of my facial hair.

This was a big moment for me because it felt like I accomplished something that took a long time for me to get so I felt fulfilled within myself for accomplishing one of my goals. This was a point in my life where I felt like I wanted to shift my identity by moving forward. To me growing my beard symbolized my growth as a man and a change that would last forever. Finally having this beard and sporting it is a testament to my patience and determination for when I was growing it.





## **My Black Denim Jeans**

I attended New Design High School in the lower east side of Manhattan. My style wasn't the flashiest but it also wasn't the most boring and basic. In my high school, nobody cared if you had the worst outfit on everyone typically went about their business as time passed on and on dragging through each and every day. Considering the fact that it was a design school. However, people did in fact notice if you had a nice outfit out and they would typically call you out for it. I'm one of those people who like to stick to the shadows when it comes to life in a crowded high school and although my outfits were not loud they all came together nicely with one staple piece.

My all-black denim jeans from Zara are a perfect staple piece that you can wear with anything. Since you can wear anything with these pants I started to wear them more and more often. The darkness of the garment made it appear that I was skinnier than I actually was. I remember the amount of lint that the jeans would accumulate because of how everything showed since the jeans are black.

These black jeans are my go-to option for almost every occasion because of how versatile it is. During my high school career, I gained so much of an attachment to these jeans because of how easy putting together outfits with them really was. Every day it felt like second nature as I put these jeans on because I knew no matter what my outfit was I would look great. The more I wore them, the more comfortable they began to feel, and they started to develop a character of their own.



## **The Vintage Rap Tee**

I've always been a fan of 90's hip-hop since I was 12 years old, as I got older my knowledge of the subject has grown immensely. Throughout high school, the vintage rap tee had become part of my weekly rotation. My collection of rap t-shirts showcase some of my favorite artists from the 90's such as The Notorious B.I.G, Tupac Shakur, Snoop Dogg, Wu-Tang Clan, BIG Pun, and my favorite artist of all time Nas. Regardless of any situation I always feel comfortable wearing one of these T-shirts. Shortly after my freshman year of college, I found myself on a date with this amazing girl who would come to be my current girlfriend. The shirt I wore on that first date was my favorite Nas T-shirt.

When it came to me wearing this vintage t-shirt it not only expressed a lot about my identity in terms of what music I listen to but it also showcased my style of dress as a communicative function. When people saw my shirts often they would give me props or even at times test my knowledge to make sure I wasn't just wearing the shirt "for fashion". They would say things like " What you know about that " or "name 5 albums if you're really a fan". I embraced these questions because I liked surprising these people about my knowledge of hip hop.

My love for Hip Hop will always be a part of my identity and it even shows when it comes to my dress. I always feel comfortable wearing these t-shirts because they make me feel like I don't have to fake anything, it's like "This is who I am, and this is what I like". It gives me a sense of feeling at home no matter what environment I'm in. It even gave me the confidence to get the girl I wanted so I'll never forget that.

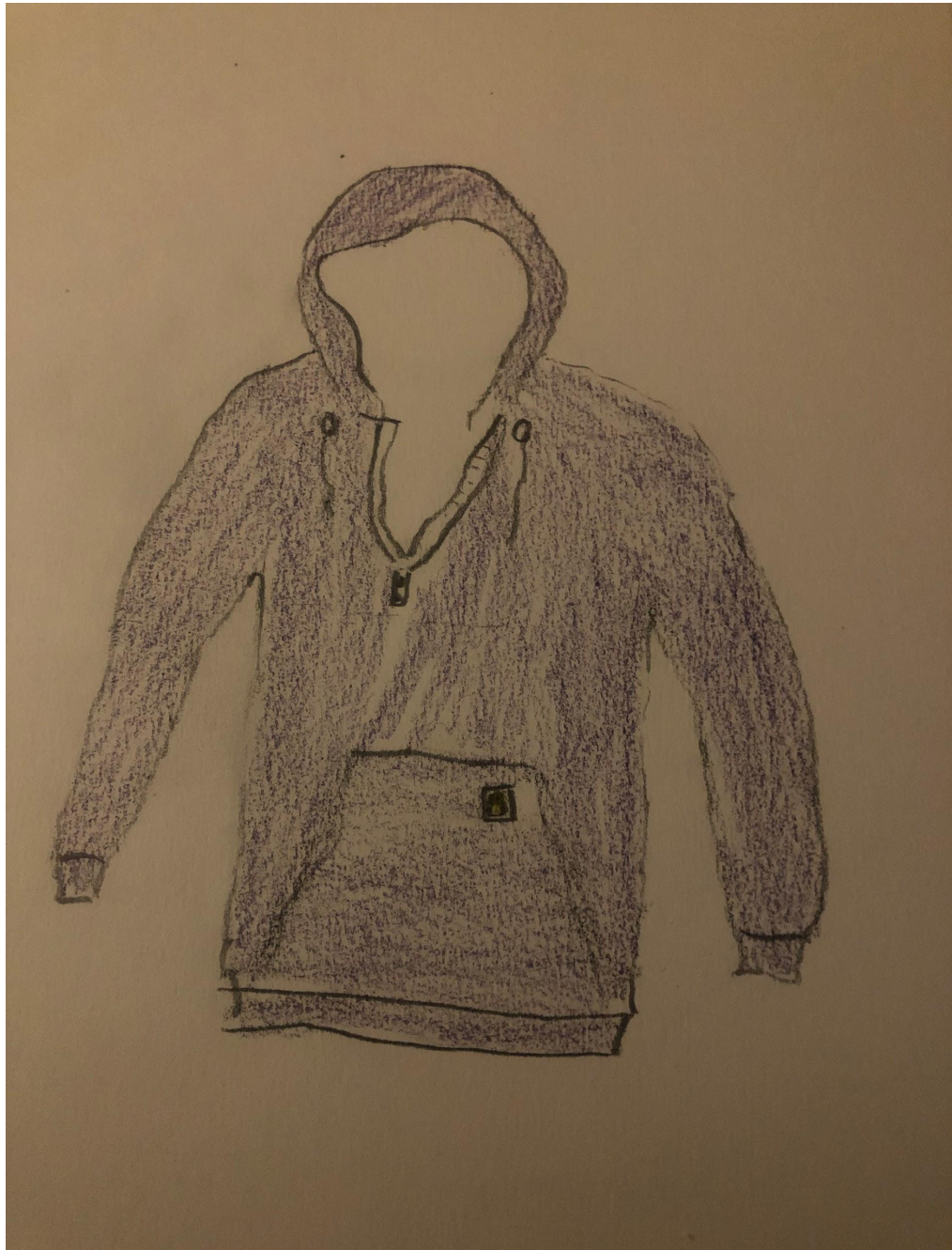


## **The Heavy Carhartt Hoodie**

Living in New York City you never know what to expect and when it comes to the weather over here the motto is to “expect the unexpected”. One day it could be freezing cold, the next day it could be sunny followed by heavy rain. If New York could be described in one item of clothing it would definitely be the hoodie. Over here it feels like every season is hoodie season whether warm or cold the hoodie is like a perfect middle-ground for every New Yorker. I found myself shuffling through numerous hoodies that weren't that great of quality and barely did the job of keeping me cozy.

The Heavyweight Carhartt “Rain Defender” hoodie is definitely the most reliable essential hoodie I have ever gotten. It has a water repellent finish to ward off those drizzly spring days. It also is made of a reinforced cotton/poly blend to keep the cold out which is perfect for those chilly fall/winter days and nights. This hoodie is very hefty which makes me appear wider but not too wide which is the perfect balance giving me a much stronger masculine appearance. The grey color gives it a classic feel and sets the tone for a staple hoodie in my collection.

When I wear my clothing I break down my dress into two categories, comfort and fashion forwardness. For me, comfort has a slight edge over fashion forwardness because I never want to be uncomfortable when wearing a garment because I always want to associate positive feelings with certain items of clothing. When it comes to this hoodie not only do I feel warm and cozy but I also gain a sense of power and strength, as if I'm always in control.



## Denim Sherpa Jacket

Denim Jackets have always been very appealing to me, It's always something about classic American fashion that always catches my eye, almost as if it were made for me. It was a gloomy night in New York City. I always found myself with my tight-knit group of friends as we usually hung out by the east river between the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridge in the good old lower east side. My friend Lou is a photographer and he usually snaps photos in a gloomy setting. Me staring at the river at night sometimes helps me find peace in the midst of chaos and Lou sees this as the perfect subject for his art.

I usually grab the same denim sherpa when I walk out of the house. It makes me blend in with the rest of society and keeps me grounded. The sherpa lining on the inside of the jacket keeps me warm and feels like I'm carrying my blanket with me outside wherever I go. The look of the classic denim jacket is a staple piece in modern menswear and certainly has stood the test of time. Every time I wear that jacket I find myself by the riverside looking at the skyline. The jacket provides the right amount of protection from the cool breeze of the river winds and matches the environment quite nicely.

This jacket always reminds me of late nights in my neighborhood by the east river. I could always rely on this very jacket if I just want to step outside my house and take a walk to relieve some stress. This jacket always makes me feel at home, it's as if I'm carrying my blanket everywhere I go. When I wear this jacket it feels like I can breathe easily and let go of all negativity and just relax.





## **Air Jordan 8 “Bugs Bunny”**

Growing up I was always addicted to buying sneakers, particularly Air Jordans. It was Christmas time in 2013 and the only thing I wanted was a pair of sneakers called the Air Jordan 8 “Bugs Bunny”. I would stay up all night looking at pictures of the shoe or watching YouTube unboxings of the shoe. To me, that shoe looked so cool and that was the only thing I wanted at the time, literally, there was nothing else I wanted for Christmas except that pair of sneakers. That whole year I had saved up enough money from my allowance to actually buy the sneaker myself. For me buying that pair of sneakers meant everything, it gave me a sense of the principle of working for your reward and it was all worth it when I unwrapped my own gift for myself on Christmas.

The Air Jordan 8 is a basketball shoe so it provides the right amount of comfort and durability. The shoe is called “Bugs Bunny” because the colorway pays homage to the looney tunes character Bugs Bunny. These shoes were an active body supplement of my everyday life for those next few years as I kept them in good shape. They were casual enough to wear them every day as well as keeping my ankle secure when playing basketball. The leather upper with two straps above the laces to ensure a secure fit makes the shoe unique which is why I like it.

My attachment to this shoe is unlike any other, it will forever be my favorite shoe of all time. This shoe reminds me of my childhood because I remember how much I wanted this shoe as a kid and the immense feeling of excitement when I purchased it. These were the first pair of expensive shoes that I had bought with my own money. These shoes will forever be instilled in my memory. The significance of these shoes is that they gave me profound confidence and made me feel self-sufficient because of the fact that I had purchased them with my own money.



## **My Knicks Jersey**

I've always been a Knicks fan and my wardrobe is usually representative of my Identity. Having my Knicks jersey allows me to take my favorite team everywhere I go. It was April 25th, 2020 the Knicks were facing off against the Kings in the world's most famous arena (Madison Square Garden) and there was this new alternate jersey that had come out that year and it was hanging in the window of the gift shop. It felt like the jersey was calling my name plus being inside the arena made me feel more inclined to buy it because of the atmosphere I was in. Every time I go to a Knicks game I get fueled with adrenaline.

As soon as I bought the jersey, I immediately put it on. I not only wanted to communicate that I was a Knick fan but that I couldn't even take a seat without wearing the orange and blue. The setting I was in certainly influenced me to make that impulse purchase. It shows how many environmental factors play a role in how I dress and the pressure to feel acclimated to a certain environment. Being a Knicks fan has always been a huge part of my identity, and has certainly influenced how I dress, especially when a lot of the clothes I wear include the colors blue and orange.

Wearing my Knicks jersey not only identifies me as a Knick fan but also allows me to send myself back in time and makes me think about that exciting feeling of watching them live at Madison Square Garden. Every time I wear that jersey it feels like I'm taking my team everywhere I go. My love for my team extends into my clothing and when I wear that jersey I wear it with pride. Nothing will ever compare to the electric feeling of watching the Knicks heat up at the world's most famous arena.

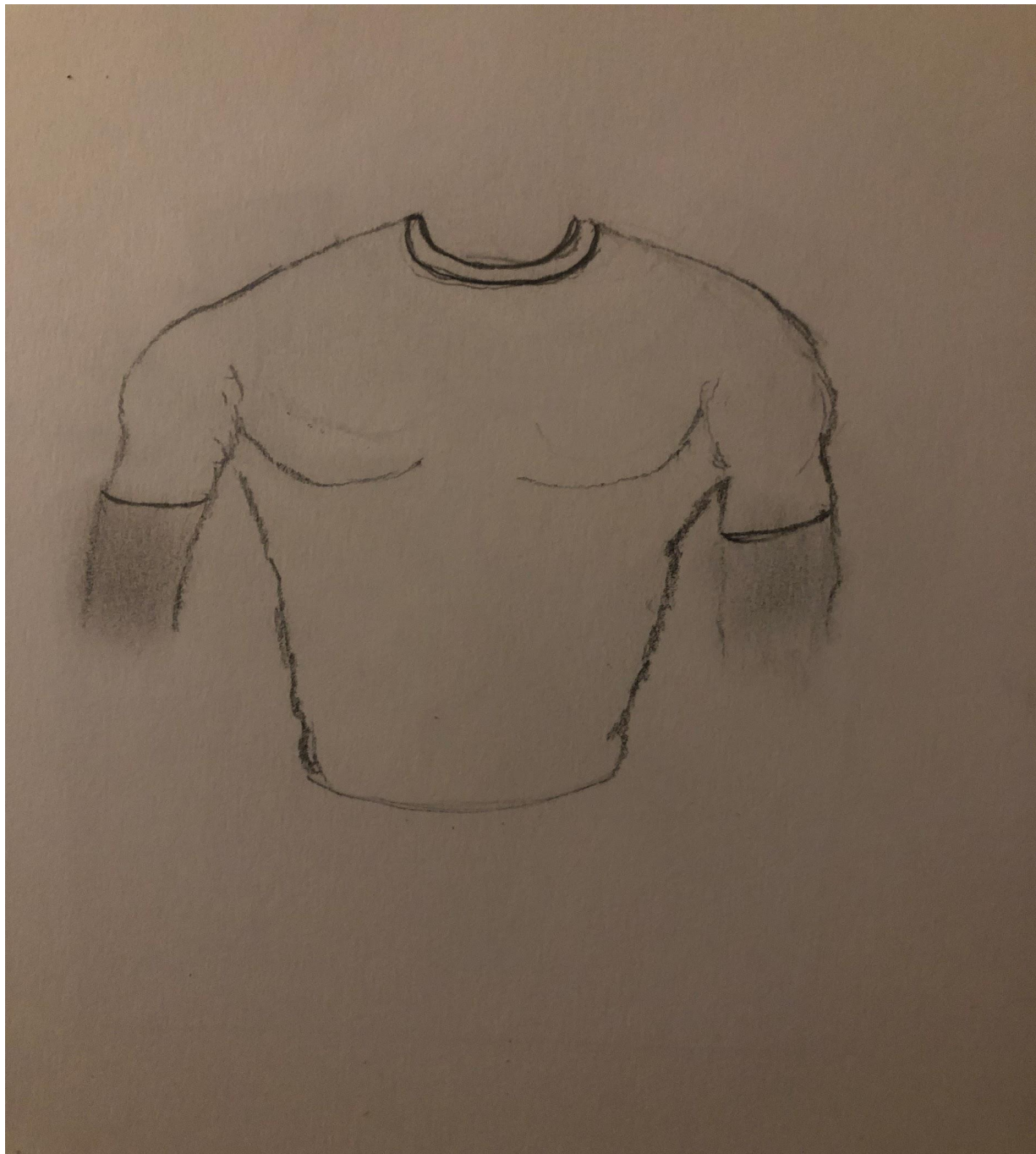


## **The Fit of my Muscle Tee**

At the beginning of 2019, I decided to make a change. I wasn't satisfied with my appearance. I only weighed 125 pounds with barely any muscle on my body. My confidence wasn't nearly where it is today and it felt I just could never gain any weight. My clothes fit oversized and I purposely bought bigger clothes so I would appear bigger. One day my counselor from high school invited me to go with him to a fancy gym called DOGPOUND. That day we trained so hard I threw up, but it was that very day that changed my life because it showed me that that's the level of discipline I have to have if I ever want to make a change. Ever since that day I stepped foot in that gym in 2019 I've been working out consistently and gained 25 pounds of muscle.

When I started getting bigger I noticed that my clothes fit me better. In particular the fit of my muscle t-shirts. The fit of my shirt is symbolic of all the time and effort I put in in the gym along with my new diet. The way I dress is representative of the various biological changes that I created when I decided to make that change in my life. When I changed my weight it was as if it was a change in identity, I went from this skinny unconfident young boy to this stronger much more confident individual. The change in the fit of my clothes will always be representative of my growth as an individual.

Not only did gaining weight boost my self-esteem it also taught me an extremely valuable lesson and that is to never limit yourself. A lot of times as individuals we set mental barriers for ourselves and say things like "I'll never be able to do this" or "That'll never work" or even "I can do this because of that". Making a change can be as simple as making the first initial step towards a path to success. You have to be your own biggest motivation before you expect anyone else to motivate you. If you aren't satisfied with your current circumstance it is possible to be the change in your own life and it starts with putting yourself in a position to make the first step and the rest is like breathing.



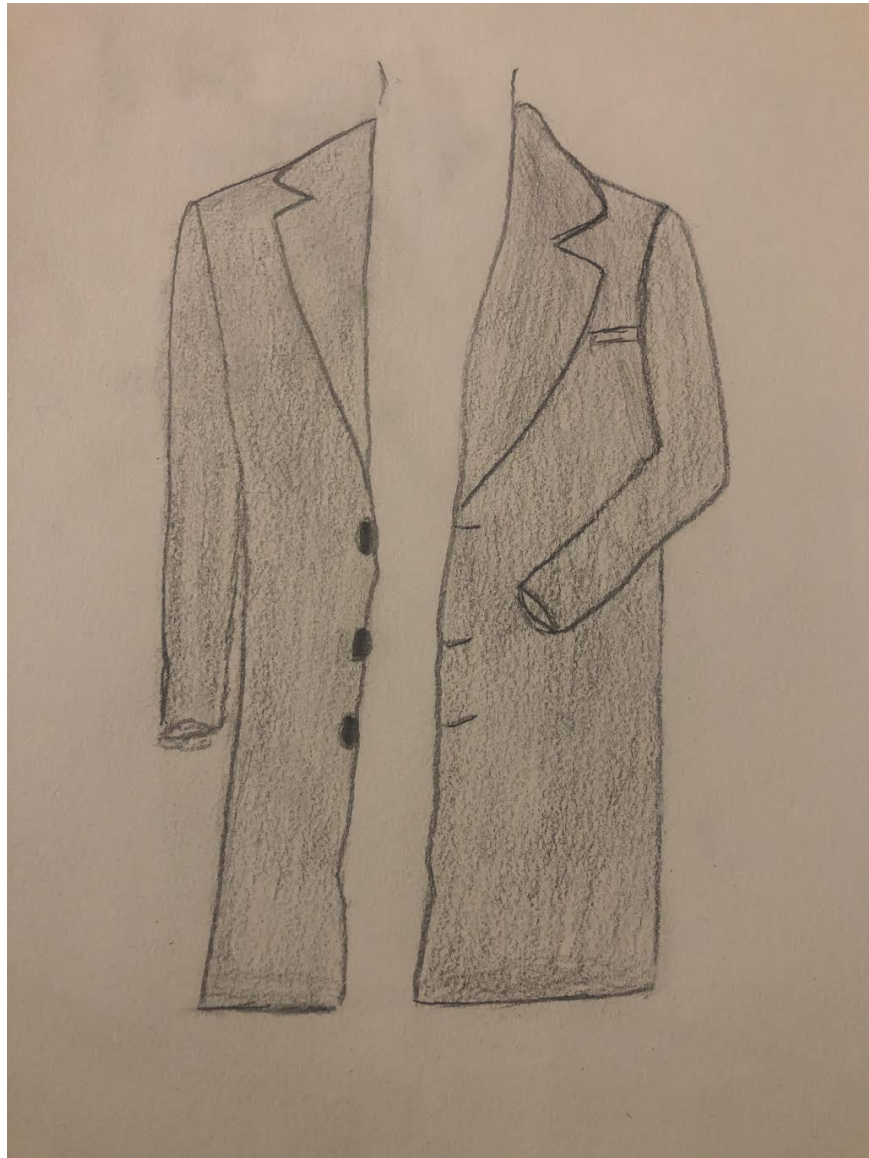
## **Grey Overcoat Trench**

It was February 11th, 2021, I remember being nervous because it was the first time that I was going to meet my girlfriend's parents. This day meant so much to me because I know how important family is to her and I wanted to make a great impression. My girlfriend is Mexican so I remember practicing my greetings and responses in Spanish so I could make her parents slightly more comfortable speaking to me although I am not fluent. I knew the best way to go about meeting them was to be myself. I am naturally polite and respectful so this helped reassure me that there was nothing to worry about. I took some quality time to think about my appearance for this particular occasion and nonetheless I was happy with the way it turned out.

A grey overcoat trench with a notched lapel was my staple piece during this time, and I knew that it gave me the look of a mature young man. The wool in the coat was heavy enough to keep me warm when stepping outside but it wasn't overbearing when I came back inside. The trench coat has been a classic in modern menswear for years and has recently become more apparent for the fall/winter seasons. Knowing that I had to make a good impression of a respectable individual I knew that this look would appear professional but not overbearing or intimidating. This look matched my identity in this particular period and was representative of my growth as a man on an occasion that was extremely important in my personal life.

Wearing this coat on this day made me feel confident and like I was meant to be there at that particular time. It gave me a sense of belonging. I will always associate that coat with positive feelings and the memory of meeting my girlfriend's parents with that particular coat will always stay with me. The entire day leading up to meeting the parents for the first I was filled with nerves and overwhelming thoughts of not wanting to make a bad impression because I knew I needed to make this day count. I knew this was my time to show her parents that I'm a great guy and that their daughter is in good hands. Once I put on

that coat it was as if all those nerves and feelings of anxiety started to slowly drift away.





## **Author's Biography**

I am 20 years old and am currently attending New York City College of Technology, majoring in Business and Technology of Fashion. My admiration for dress started at an early age, I was always interested in dressing up and making sure the clothes I wore always matched or at least looked presentable. When I was younger I loved dressing up in costumes even when it wasn't Halloween. All year round I would dress up as my favorite superhero, athlete, video game character, movie star, etc. By doing this I was always happy, it made life more fun and enjoyable as a young kid. This is when I realized that the things that I wore truly impacted the way that I felt along with my life experiences. Throughout life my biggest influences and inspirations will forever be the people that are closest to me, this includes my parents, family, friends, and my girlfriend. These are the people that drive me to reach my fullest potential as a man, they certainly make me want to continue to pursue my passions and keep me dressing to impress. My love for hip hop and sports has also tremendously influenced my sense of style when it comes to street and athletic wear and that will always be a part of my identity. In 2014 I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes; a lifelong disease that destroys insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. Living with this disease has taught me that life should never be taken for granted and that we should never put limitations on ourselves because anything is achievable with the right mindset. All of my influences are certainly represented in Life, Love, and How I dress.