

It Has to Be the Kicks

By David Bautista

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Prologue

Something you own may be seen as regular or boring to someone else, but to you it's not. To you that thing is more important and means a lot more than anyone knows. This is what defines sentimental value.

To some people, sneakers are just seen as something you put on your feet and walk around in. But to me, sneakers are more than that, they can tell many stories.

Foreword

Many would say that New York City is the Mecca of modern-day streetwear and culture, representing the fashion and the culture of people of color. Many faces of the streetwear movement like A\$AP Rocky, Kanye West, Virgil found success in the vibrant culture and fabrics of a bustling New York City. David Bautista is another example of such an icon, although he is not recognized globally for his outfits and taste in fashion, it plays as big of a role in his life as it did for his idols like Virgil.

Growing up in Elmhurst, David did not have it easy and one of the ways he learned to cope with the reality of being a low-income New Yorker who struggled to fit in at school, because of his shyness, was through his outfits. He felt like a Virgil wearing a pair of Carhartt WIP pants or even a The North Face x Supreme Nuptse. Donning a pair of Jordan 1s, Nike SB Dunks, or even Vans in his favorite colorway allowed him to express himself to the world, better than he ever could verbally.

His outfits would be centered around the occasion of the day and help him tackle moments of vulnerability, pride, and achievement. They are the staple behind his recollection of his life and the following pages vividly describe several staple outfits. Each pertaining to an important developmental memory that has helped him to shape how he is today. The following stories and outfits are the summation of David Bautista thus far.

Nazmus Sakib 11/20/2022

Table of Contents

Chapter #1: Like Mike?	6
Chapter #2: First Day in 73	9
Chapter #3: New Class, Who Dis?	12
Chapter #4: First of Many	15
Chapter #5: Being Flow...?	18
Chapter #6: Out in the Jungle	21
Chapter #7: First Date	24
Chapter #8: A Sneakerheads' Worst Nightmare	27
Chapter #9: Flower Boy	30
Chapter #10: Graduation	33
Chapter #11: "Hurst X Nike"	36
Chapter #12: A Death in the Family	39
About the Author	42

Chapter 1: Like Mike?

When I was between the ages seven and nine, I would play outside the apartment building I live in which is in Elmhurst Queens. I was allowed to play outside because I wasn't allowed to go to the park and it was convenient for my parents to watch me, no traveling required, and it was safer than the park. It would usually be me, both of my older sisters, my two cousins who were siblings, my younger cousin when he would visit, and occasionally my father. We would always play soccer and usually go out on nice days like in the spring and summer, sometimes the fall when the weather was still nice. Although this memory occurred numerous times, the one thing I will always remember is the sneakers I wore to play.

An outfit I remember wearing off the top of my head was a Tommy Hilfiger t-shirt, a pair of Nike shorts, and of course my pair of Jordans. The Tommy Hilfiger t-shirt was a white color shirt to match my sneakers and had the Tommy Hilfiger flag logo across the chest in predominantly navy blue and red *color*. The letters from the flag logo were embroidered while the flag was made up of stitched fabric. The Nike shorts were mostly a black *color* with some blue along the sides that *wrapped* around the bottom of the shorts, and white for an outline along the blue panel and Nike Swoosh logo. The sneakers were an even black, white, and red *color* that had red laces. The sneakers were pretty worn down as they had creases on the toe box and heel drag which is when someone drags the heel of their sneaker as they walk causing the rubber to shave off overtime. I remember tying my sneakers tight to the point where it would *wrap* around my ankle because it would have ankle stability.

A *body modification* I can remember is wearing glasses that were attached *to my body*. I've been wearing glasses at an early age, and I wore them to play soccer because I couldn't see a lot without them. Another *body modification* I can recall was my *hair* because my haircut was

always a buzzcut when I was younger. My parents always made me get a buzzcut because my parents and my uncle didn't like the idea of boys having long *hair*. A *third body modification* I remember was having to shower after playing because I would be sweating like a maniac, and it was gross to go to bed like that according to my mom.

These sneakers mean something to me because I always thought these sneakers advanced my skills in soccer. I thought the sneakers made me kick better, block shots as goalkeeper, bypass our opponents' defense, and run faster. I didn't wear another pair of sneakers because I thought if I wore a different pair of sneakers, I would lose all those skills and play horrible. I guess you can say I was just like Bow Wow's character, Calvin, in the 2002 film *Like Mike*. In the film, Calvin wouldn't play basketball without his Nike Blazers because they gave him basketball skills like Michael Jordan. If I couldn't find those sneakers, I wouldn't play.



Chapter 2: First Day in 73

My first day of sixth grade was on September 6th, 2012, and it was my first time attending I.S.73 The Frank Sansivieri School located at 70-02 54th Ave, Queens, NY 11378. I remember my mom waking up my sister and me around 6:30 in the morning because the school was in Maspeth, and we had to catch the Q58 bus to make it to school on time. I planned out my outfit for the first day a couple weeks before because my parents went back to school shopping early. I was excited and nervous at the same time because it was completely different from elementary school. I remember arriving at school on time and my older sister dropping me off at my homeroom/math class because she was more familiar with the school. After homeroom I had math class which was in the same room with the same teacher and about 15 minutes into the math class, I made two new friends, Ashley and Arwin.

I still remember the outfit I wore to the first day of sixth grade; a Hollister t-shirt, a pair of Polo Ralph Lauren denims, a pair of 2012 Air Jordan Retro 7, and to top it all off a North Face Hot Shot backpack. The Hollister t-shirt was a white *color* shirt with a giant dark red seagull and the Hollister spell out was in navy blue. The seagull and Hollister spell out were stitched on patches with unfinished edges to give it a vintage look now that I look back at it. The pair of Polo denim jeans were from the children's collection because they were cheaper than men. The pair of denim jeans were a dark blue *color* and straight fit. The sneakers I wore were the Air Jordan Retro 7 in the "Raptors" colorway. The base of the sneaker was nubuck and all black with little hits of red and purple on the midsole and back tab to represent the Toronto Raptors team *colors*. My backpack was a black color and the newer version I had to upgrade from my old elementary school backpack.

I remember after waking up I went to the bathroom to wash my face and *hair* because I took a shower the night before. I also brushed my *teeth* to get rid of the morning *breath* and it was the first day of school. After that, I applied lotion to my face and body to hydrate my *skin* and I put on deodorant to fight against the *odor* from my underarms throughout the day. Once I was done with that I changed into my outfit, put on my glasses, and ate breakfast which left a certain after *taste* in my mouth. A new body *modification* I had at the time was an ear piercing that was *inserted* in my left ear lobe.

This sneaker is important to me because I wore them to a new school and the start of a new chapter. Whenever I see that sneaker, it brings back memories of the sixth grade. The sixth grade was different from the fifth grade because there was no uniform required which meant I could wear whatever I wanted. I kind of started to care about my appearance. This sneaker was also one of the first pairs I got to pick for myself during back-to-school shopping. When it came to shopping, my parents would usually pick out my sneakers or just get me the same pair as my older brother.



Chapter 3: New Class, Who Dis?

My time in middle school was going great up until the eighth grade or at least I thought. In the sixth and seventh grade, I was in an honors class but for the eighth-grade year I was transferred to a regular class. The first day of eighth grade was just like the first day of the sixth grade because I was aware of the class I was transferring to, and I thought I wasn't going to fit in which made me nervous. I got up early like usual, prepared to head to school, and then took the bus to school. I remember when I was walking into homeroom, everyone in that new class was staring at me and whispering to each other as I walked to a desk. This made me even more nervous than I initially was that I didn't try to speak to my new classmates or make new friends.

The outfit I wore for the first day of eighth grade was different from my outfit for the first day of sixth grade. I wore a black Billionaire Boys Club t-shirt, some Levi's cargo shorts, a pair of Air Jordan Retro 4, and a Jansport backpack. The Billionaire Boys Club t-shirt was black *color* with their arch logo graphic in like a silver-gray print. I remember buying the shirt early in the summer and not wearing it until the first day of school. The Levi's cargo shorts were a black *color* and they were made from a pretty thin cotton. The shorts were *pre shaped* to fit right at my knees. The backpack was just a regular black *color* Jansport backpack that was *suspended* from my shoulders. The sneakers I wore were the Air Jordan Retro 4 "bred". The colorway is simple but works well. The sneaker had a black *color* nubuck upper with the midsoles being black and white and the bottom soles being red and gray.

I remember waking up in the morning and really prepping myself up. I washed my face thoroughly to wet the *surface* of my skin, brushed my teeth and rinsed with mouthwash to get rid of that morning *breath*. After I came out of the bathroom, I put lotion on my body to hydrate my *skin* and changed into my new outfit. I remember cleaning my piercing hole because I got a new

earring and to *insert* it into my ear. I also put on my new glasses that were a rectangular frame, different from my old ones.

This sneaker is important to me because it was the first one sneaker, I picked out myself and the first used sneaker I made my mom buy me. I had to hide the fact that the sneakers were used or else I would've got yelled at and in trouble. I remember trying to restore the midsoles on these sneakers because after wearing them a couple times, the paint on the midsole began to crack and peel. The first time I tried restoring them, I failed and didn't give it another shot until a couple months later. The second time I tried, it was still bad, but I was satisfied enough with the results that I wore the again. This sneaker also got me more interested into the sneaker culture and turned me to what you call a "sneakerhead."



Chapter 4: First of Many

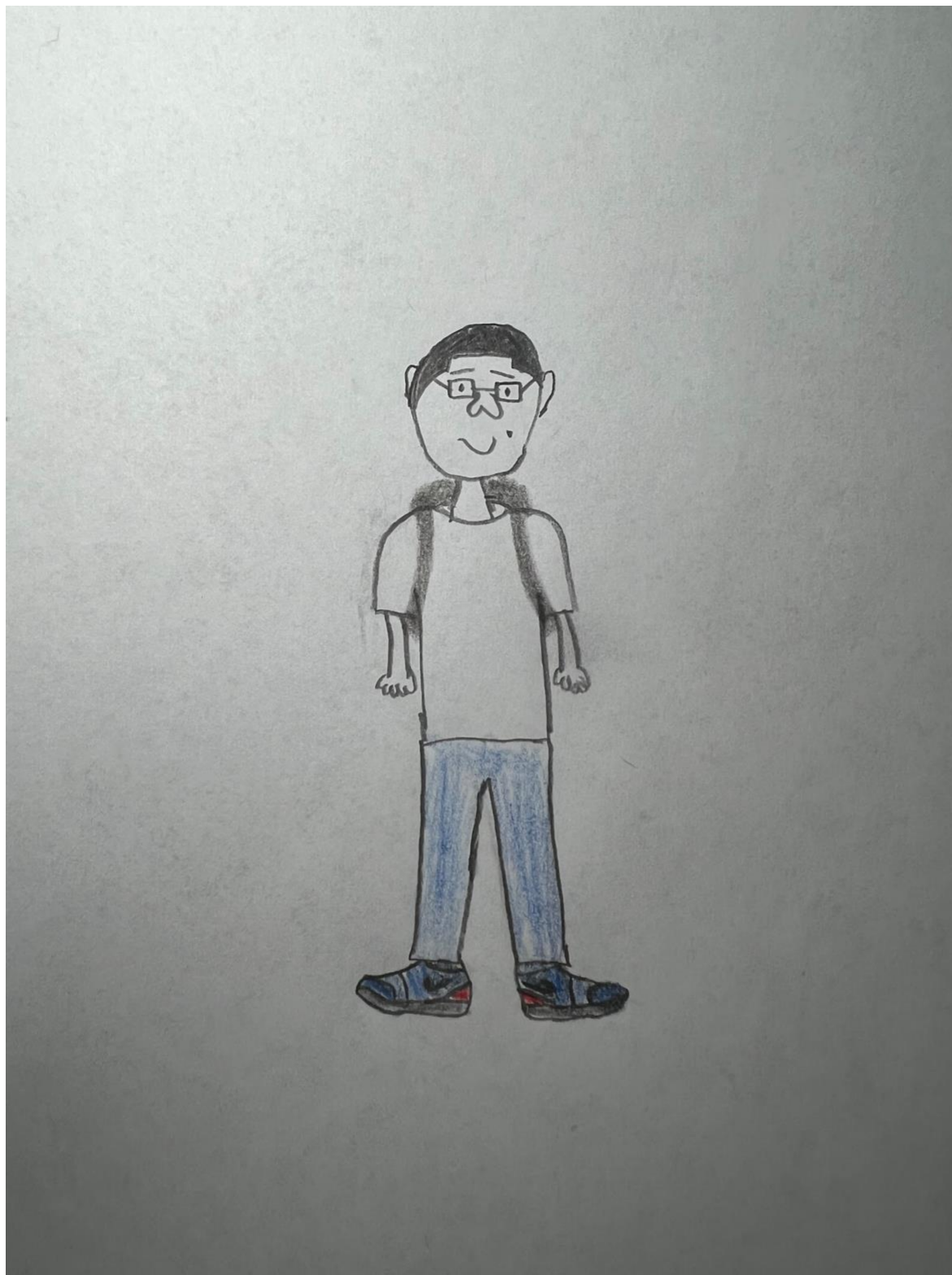
At this point in my life, I had graduated from middle school and started the ninth grade. Around two weeks into the year, I was late for the first time. I remember waking up around 8:40 am, an hour later than I usually do because my first period started at 9:30 am. I had to rush out the door to make it to school on time. I wore whatever clothes I saw first; I didn't have time to plan out an outfit. It usually takes 10 minutes to walk to the 90th St stop on the 7-train line, but I did it in about 5 minutes. Once I got to Main St, I had to transfer to the Q44 bus which dropped me off in front of my school, John Bowne High School. I remember swiping my ID card and speed walking to my class which was in the parking lot in these shipping containers. Right as I opened the door, I can see everybody looking up and staring at me as I walked to my seat. It was such an awkward and embarrassing moment because it wasn't one of those moments where I had an excuse as to why I was late.

As I said before, the outfit I wore that day was weird as I didn't have time to plan it. I remember wearing a white t-shirt, a pair of Levi's jeans, a pair of Nike Free Run 2.0 sneakers, and a Nike Elite backpack. The t-shirt I wore was white *color* but I forgot the brand it was. The jeans I wore were a pair of slim straight Levi's Jeans in a washed blue color. These jeans *wrapped* my legs as if they were skinny jeans and not slim because they were uncomfortable. The backpack I had was a gray *color* Nike Elite backpack which was very popular at the time. The sneakers I wore were the 2012 Nike Free Run 2.0 in the Doernbecher colorway. It had a blue base *color* made of suede and mesh with little touches of crimson red, and a gray *color* bottom soles with speckles. And some parts of the bottom sole glowed in the dark.

Since I woke up later than usual, I had to rush through my morning routine. First, I washed my face in like 10 seconds by just splashing water and then brushed my teeth without

using mouthwash. Next, I put lotion on my body and face, usually I do two squirts from the lotion bottle but this time I did one, which wasn't enough, because I was short on time. At the time, I wasn't wearing my piercing anymore, so I just had a small hole on my left ear lobe. I forgot to wear my glasses that day because I couldn't find them and wasted a lot of time trying to find them. I remember as I walked to the train station, I was sweating a lot because it was kind of humid which made me have body *odor* and my *hair* sweaty and wet.

These sneakers are also one of my favorite sneakers and hold sentimental value because I made my first genuine friend in high school with these sneakers. During freshmen year of high school, I was spending most of my time in Facebook sneaker groups that consisted of buying, selling, and trading. I saw a for sale post about these sneakers and I messaged the seller about my interest in them. I view the profile after we agree to a price and a location to meet, and I come to find out I've seen the seller in my school. His name was Seaweed Chen, and he was two years older than me. As we were finishing the transaction, he said to me "Hey, I've seen you around my school. John Bowne, right?" and we have a little chat about the same school we go to. As we're about to part ways, he says "I'll catch you around." The following day, I see him at school, and he says "what's up" to me and daps me up which feels cool because I now have a friend who's older than me. We got to know each other more throughout the year and hang out more.



Chapter 5: Being Flow...?

During sophomore year of high school, I got interested in skateboarding because of the brands I wore like Supreme and Palace Skateboards. On June 3rd, 2017, almost a month after Palace opened its first US retail location on 49 Howard Street, I went to check out the shop for anything new. After a couple minutes of browsing, I see an employee come out from the back, walk up to me and hand me a skateboard. I was surprised and confused after he handed me the skateboard and asked him "what's it for " and he said it's to replace my old skateboard that got soaked in rain from the grand opening of the store. The employee's name is Alex, and he was a nice guy, I think he's in charge of the shop or some sort of manager.

The shirt I wore that day was a 90% cotton and 10% polyester gray short sleeve t-shirt from a skate shop called LICK. The shirt was a large size because I wanted a baggy and drapery fit. The pants I wore were a pair of Nike SB pants in a khaki color. These pants had a slim straight fit which had the right fit I wanted because it wasn't too baggy nor too skinny. The sneakers I wore were a pair of Nike SB Dunk Lows in the sea crystal colorway. I wore those sneakers because I brought my skateboard with me to the shop, and they were my skateboarding shoes. These sneakers had some tears on the ankle area or the sock liner and top eyelets, and some of the suede fabric had ripped off in the toe area because of all the flicking and dragging when attempting a trick.

Around this time, I was getting haircuts about every 4-6 months but getting a shape up or line up every month or so. Since I had my skateboard with me and it was warm outside, my hair was sweaty and wet, changing the *shape* and *volume* of my hair. Also, I had on different glasses. The glasses were Gucci, and the frame was rectangular and thicker than my previous pair. My

skin was sticky and dry from all the sweating, especially my fingers because of the grip tape from holding my skateboard.

At the time, my skateboarding skills were not as great because I was still new to skateboarding, I wasn't even able to do an ollie without bailing the landing. So being gifted something like that felt amazing, like I was being accepted even if I sucked. Even the rips and tears on my sneakers showed how determined and committed I was to skateboarding. Also, I was given something from a brand I really loved at the time, which was mind boggling, a brand like Palace recognizing me?! It was a crazy experience, it felt as if I was a flow skateboarder for them which is when a skateboard company sends products to a skateboarder from time to time because they can be a good asset to the team.



Chapter 6: Out in the Jungle

On March 25th, 2017, Nike released a new Air Max 1 colorway called the Master. Once I heard about this release and read it was being released in select NikeLab and Nike retail stores, I was instantly hooked to get them. On March 24th, I went to the NikeLab store, on 21 Mercer Street, and camped out for them. While I was waiting across the street from the store, I see a group of three people walk towards me, blasting music from a Bluetooth speaker. As they're coming close to me, one of them puts their hand out for a dap or handshake and says, "I mess with the fit." I put my hand out for the dap and say "Thanks man. Appreciate it." As I'm putting out my hand, I look up and see it's Kerwin Frost who just said that to me.

Since I planned to wait outside overnight, I wore a The North Face Nuptse jacket and it wasn't just any regular Nuptse jacket, it was a collaboration between Supreme and The North Face. The jacket had a leaves print throughout the whole jacket and it was a large size which was loosely *wrapped* around me and had some drape. The pants I wore were a pair of Nike SB pants in a khaki colorway that were slim straight and fit just right, not too tight nor too loose. The sneakers I wore were a pair of Nike Air Presto in the Safari colorway. The colors on the sneakers matched with the jacket I wore that day; it was very subtle but popped out. I liked how these sneakers fit, they *wrapped* around my foot nicely and gave the sneaker a snug fit which was just right for me.

Around that time of the year, it was still cold outside. I remember while I was waiting my lips were getting dry and rough *texture*. I had no ChapStick or anything of that sort with me, which I should've brought. I also remember I went after I had dinner which I would have after I came back from school. I know there was a change in my body *odor*, but I didn't really mind it because I was planning on sleeping outside for the night.

Around that time Kerwin Frost was coming up in the fashion scene so being complimented by him was insane, and now he's popular and known by everyone. Those words stuck with me because he liked my entire outfit, from my jacket down to the sneakers. Not only was it insane, but it also boosted my confidence in wearing what I like and to wearing it with pride. This also increased my interest in fashion and styling which eventually led me to picking a fashion major at City Tech. Till this day, I still remember that interaction I had with him.



Chapter 7: First Date

On July 12th, 2018, I went on my first date with this girl named Kayla who I met during junior year of high school and had a crush on. She told me her cousin would come along as well; she was around the same age as us. We started out by going to the American Museum of Natural History located on 200 Central Park West. After the museum, we walked to Time Square to visit the Line Friends shop on 1515 Broadway. Next, we grabbed a quick bite at the Pret A Manger that used to be around Time Square on 7th Ave. We ended the day by walking to her sister's workplace, near 23rd St and 7th Ave, to meet her and go home.

I remember I planned out the outfit I was going to wear. For the upper body, I wore a red Thames t-shirt that's 100% cotton. The t-shirt had a loose fit which I liked because I don't like wearing tight t-shirts. For the bottoms, I wore a H&M 6-pocket cargo pants in black that was 100% cotton. I liked these pants a lot because of the way they fit. A lot of the cargo pants at the time fit between slim and skinny, which I didn't like, but this pair had the baggy fit that I liked. Now for the sneakers, I wore a pair of Nike SB Dunk Lows in the "mafia" colorway. The uppers of the sneakers were made of black patent leather and black faux fur like material, it also had little hits of red like for the laces and the bottom soles of the sneaker.

When I was asked to go on the date, I was on my way home from some place, so I decided to get a haircut for the special occasion. I remember I asked my barber to cut a bit off the top, sides and to give me a line up because my hair was kind of messy and I needed to look good. I also remember taking a shower twice, one was after my haircut and the second one was in the morning of my date so I can have a good *odor*. After taking a shower, I put on a handful of lotion so my *skin* can have a smooth *texture*. I also put on deodorant so my body *odor* would smell

good, I put on ChapStick so my lips wouldn't get dry throughout the day, and I brushed my *teeth* thoroughly to not have bad *breath*. I had to look my best.

These sneakers hold a special place in my heart because I wore them to my first date, and I was the one being asked out. I had feelings for her, and she had feelings for me too. This gave me a confidence boost because I was a shy person during high school, I was too worried about what others thought about me. It also made me feel loved because I wasn't good with girls since I didn't match their expectations with looks and stuff. It showed me I shouldn't worry what others think and just be myself because eventually somebody will love me for who I am.



Chapter 8: A Sneakerheads' Worst Nightmare

On December 19, 2018, the NikeLab store on 21 Mercer released the Nike X Off White Air Force 1 Low in a volt and black colorway that were released through a reservation process done on the SNKRS app the day before. I met up with my friend at the store because he won multiple reservations, and he needed help picking up the reservations. At around 9 pm, we were done picking up his reservations, and as we were about to say our goodbyes, a man approached us because he was interested in buying the sneakers. My friend was trying to work out a deal with the man but all sudden while he's checking out the sneakers, he starts to slowly walk away from us and says, "don't follow me or do anything I have a gun." We didn't listen and we tried following him from a distance, but we eventually lost him.

I remember I wore my Extra Butter and The North Face Nuptse jacket that day because it was cold. The jacket was a large size because I liked that drapey and loose fit so I can wear a sweatshirt underneath. For the bottoms, I wore a pair of light washed jeans. These jeans had an athletic fit because it was meant for skateboarding, but it fit like straight and tapered at the bottoms. For the sneakers, I wore a pair of Diamond Supply Co. and Nike SB Dunk Lows in the black diamond colorway. The sneakers were 75% black and 25% white, the leather on the sneaker had a crocodile print and it also had a removable Velcro Swoosh logo that was silver which revealed a Tiffany color Swoosh logo when removed.

Since I met up with my friend right after school, I didn't really modify my body in a certain way. I did my regular get ready for school routine which did have some modifications but nothing special. I started off by washing my face with cold water to wake me up and get rid of any dirt on my *skin*. After washing my face, I brushed my *teeth* and took mouth wash to freshen

up my *breath*. Next, I applied lotion throughout my body to moisturize my *skin*. Then to top it all off, I applied lip balm on my lips to get rid of the dryness.

The sneakers I mentioned are important to me because I went through a lot with them. I got the sneakers during senior year of high school and senior year was my favorite year in high school. I had on these sneakers when I was with my friend and he got robbed at gunpoint, I went through a heartbreak in these sneakers, I restarted my entrepreneurial adventure in these sneakers. Not only is it the miles I walked in these sneakers important to me, but how I acquired them also. I waited more than five hours online to get these sneakers and in the cold. The worst part wasn't the waiting, it was the fighting I had to do amongst hundreds of people. But in the end, it showed me how much of a determined person I am.



Chapter 9: Flower Boy

On April 17, 2019, was flower day at my high school John Bowne. The way it worked was prior to flower day, you order and pay the Student Union around five dollars to give a flower at a certain class period on flower day to someone; a friend, crush, teacher, etc. I don't quite remember what period I was in when I got my flower, but I do remember it was a computer business class. The flower I got came from Kayla, a friend of mine but also the girl I had a crush on in senior year. I also remember walking around school with the flower and then I put it in a vase with some water when I got home.

Since I knew it was going to be flower day, I planned out my outfit the night before. For the top, I wore a black hoodie from Uniqlo which was 100% cotton and had sort of an oversized fit which made it have some drape. For the pants, I wore a pair of slim black cargos from Stone Island which were 100% cotton that had a faded look after washing and drying them a couple of times. The pants *wrapped* around my legs just fine. For the sneakers, I wore a pair of Vans Era Pro in collaboration with Supreme and the designer Jean Paul Gaultier. I wore the peach *color* that had a floral print throughout the sneaker that had a rough *texture* because the sneaker was made from canvas.

I remember I got a haircut the night before. Around that time, I was letting my *hair* grow out so all I asked for was a fade on the sides and nothing on the top. My barber also gave my hair some *texture* by putting powder on it. After my haircut I took a quick shower to rinse off the excess hair from my head and body. The morning of flower day, I took another shower to completely get all the dirt off from the day before. After showering, I put on lotion to smoothen my *skin* and get rid of that dry and rough feel on my skin. I brushed my *teeth* after cleaning and got a minty scent in my mouth and I cleaned the piercing on my left ear lobe.

These Vans are important to me because something good happened to me when I wore them. I didn't have much luck when it came to girls. I've had crushes on girls throughout my life, but nothing went further than that. So, getting this flower from my crush meant a lot to me because it showed my luck was finally there and it was the last year of high school which is supposed to be the best year of high school. These sneakers are kind of like the ones I wore to my first date.



Chapter 10: Graduation

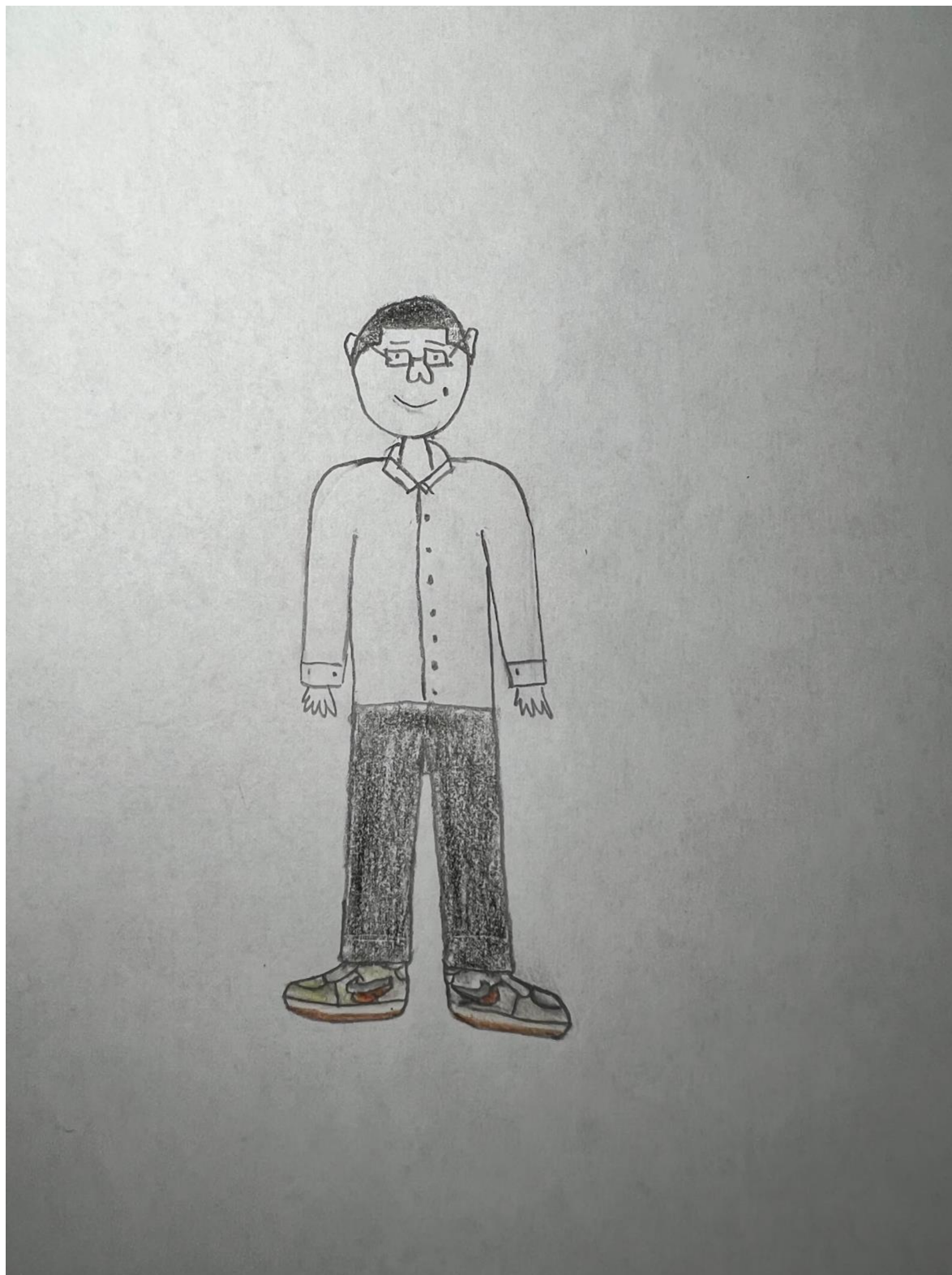
On June 26, 2019, my high school John Bowne held their 12th grade graduation ceremony at the Carnesecca Arena in the St John's campus on 80-00 Utopia Pkwy in Jamaica, Queens. I went to the ceremony with my mom Zabrina and my older sister Maria because my school only gave each student two extra tickets for guests. We took an uber there instead of taking the E train and then the Q46 bus. I remember arriving at the arena early to meet up with my friend Jack and we waited in a small auditorium inside the arena with all the other graduates.

Given that it was my graduation, I laid out my outfit the night before. I wore a single cuff dress shirt in *color* white from Polo Ralph Lauren. The shirt was *pre-shaped* to have a slim fit which *wrapped* around my shoulders and arms perfectly. To go along with the white dress shirt, I wore a pair of slim chinos in *color* black which were from Uniqlo. The chinos enclosed my legs just right, not too tight which was how I liked it. Instead of wearing dress shoes to go with the outfit, I decided to wear a pair of sneakers. I wore a pair of Nike Air Force 1 which were a collaboration with the rapper Travis Scott. The uppers were made from canvas and were a sail off white *color* as well as the midsole, and the bottom soles were a gum or brown *color*. The sneakers had many accessories such as three different pairs of Nike swooshes, two patches to put on each tongue of the sneaker, and two sets of lace locks which were supposed to mimic his grills. The accessories I had on the sneakers were the patches, the lace locks, and the silver and flame swooshes.

Graduating from high school is a milestone for many. To celebrate this achievement, you must freshen up, so I got a haircut a couple days before the graduation. I got a fade on the sides and cut a bit of *hair* from the top of my head. Also, I had to get a haircut because I hadn't got one for like two months, so my *hair* was looking messy. The morning of graduation, I took a

long shower to deeply clean my *hair*, *head*, arms, and *skin*, pretty much my whole body. After the shower, I put on lotion to smoothen my dry skin and I put on cologne and deodorant to fight any nasty *odor* throughout the day. I also brushed and mouth washed my *teeth* to make my smile pop out for the pictures. I had to make sure I looked my best on this important day.

These sneakers are important to me because I achieved a milestone in them. Not only did I celebrate my graduation in them, but I wore those sneakers to the ceremony instead of the dress shoes that you're supposed to wear for that kind of occasion. The funny thing is I was planning on wearing the Nike Air Yeezy 2, but they had a hefty price tag of over \$1,000 for a pair in used condition. But I'm glad I went with these because of the extra details it had like the removable swooshes, the lace locks, and the 3M lining throughout the sneaker. It was like my sneakers were shining and glistening like a diamond chain. I felt like I stood out and dressed apart from everyone because no one can really see what you're wearing underneath the gown except for the shoes which can also show your character, and I know people saw my sneakers when I walked up on the stage.



Chapter 11: Hurst X Nike

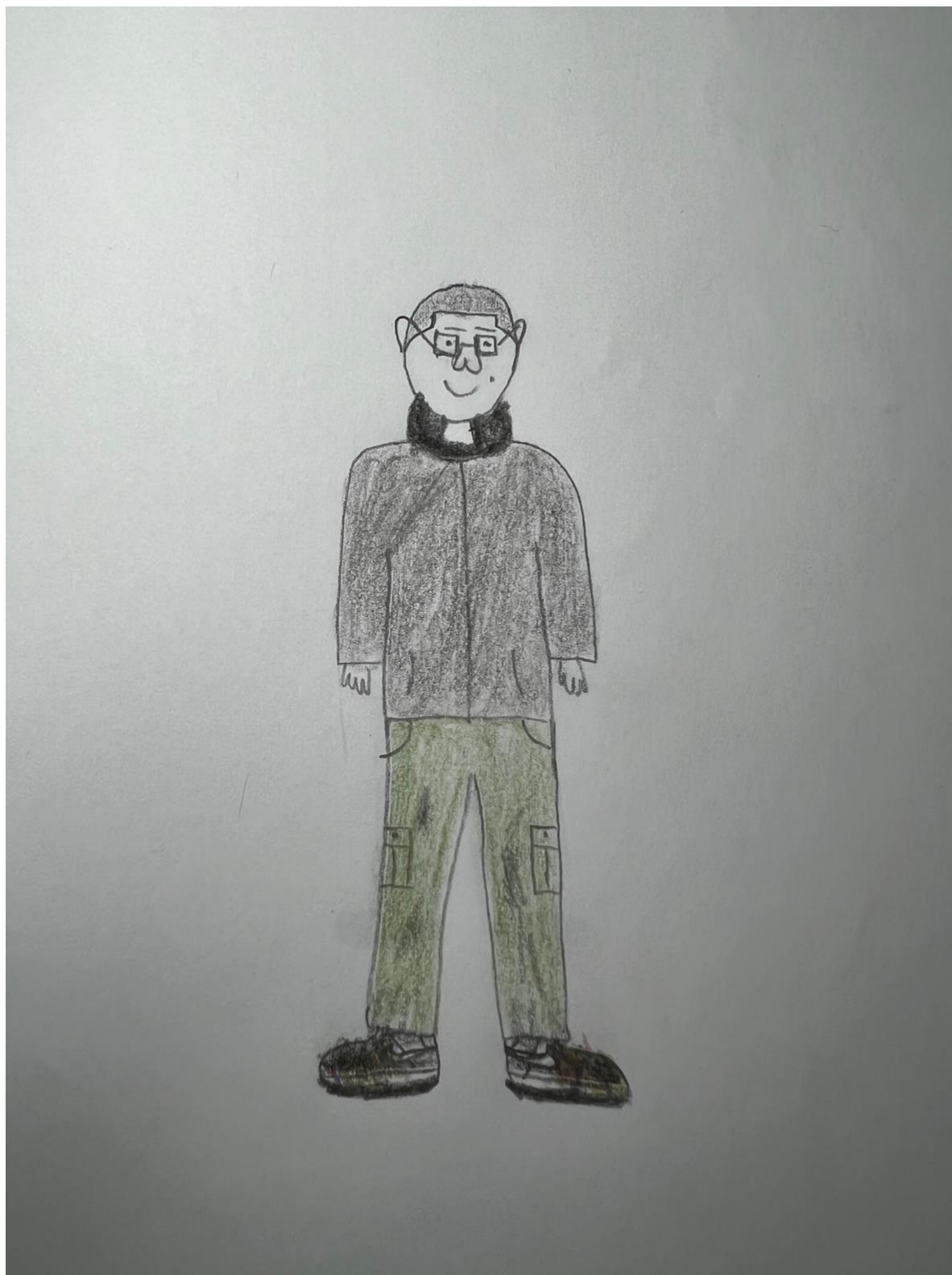
On March 9, 2020, I ordered a pair of Nike Air Force 1 that I customized from Nike.com. I made these sneakers with the intention to create my own colorway or design. A week later, I bought a paint brush along with red, baby blue, yellow, and white paint. About a month later April 13, 2020, the sneakers arrived at my home, and I started working on them the same day. I decided to do a paint splatter design on the sneakers because the sneakers were just black and white. I created the design by flicking the paint brush throughout the sneaker with each color paint at a time. Once I was done, I let the paint dry on the sneakers so I could wear them the next day.

The outfit I wore with those sneakers was casual, in my opinion. I wore two layers for my outerwear, a hooded sweatshirt, and a fleece zip up, because it was still cold at the time. The hooded sweatshirt was a black *color* and from Uniqlo and the fleece was a dark gray *color* and it was from Patagonia. The sweatshirt had a *pre-shaped* fit because it laid just right on my body, whereas the fleece was oversized so I can wear something underneath it. The pants I wore were a pair of olive-green *color* cargo pants from H&M. The pants had a relaxed fit and were distressed because I had them for about a year. I also wore a facemask because this was when the city was in quarantine due to COVID-19. The sneakers I wore were the Nike Air Force 1 I customize the night before. The sneakers were black and white but had numerous of colors splashed on to it to make the sneaker stand out.

I didn't apply a lot of body modifications that day because I was just doing errands. I got out of bed and started getting ready to get dressed. First thing I did was apply a facial cleanser on my face to clean and hydrate my *skin*. After applying the cleanser, I took a shower and used a body wash, shampoo, and conditioner to clean my *hair* and *skin*. After showering, I applied

lotion to moisturize my *skin* and face. Around this time, my *hair* was short because I gave myself a buzz cut since the barbershops were closed and the whole city was in quarantine because of COVID-19.

These sneakers are important to me because they were the first pair of sneakers, I customized myself or designed myself, it felt like I was making a sneaker for Nike. Also, around this time New York City was in quarantine so everyone had a ton of time to do things at home. I was influenced by the Maison Margiela Replica sneaker that had a paint splatter design because it was such a well-done sneaker to my eyes, but the retail price was high for me to afford. What makes this sneaker special is I put the name of the brand that I came up with, Hurst. Doing this customization gave me inspiration to try to create my own clothing brand soon.



Chapter 12: A Death in the Family

Unfortunately, my father passed away in the beginning of 2022 and my family held his funeral on March 5th, 2022, about a couple weeks after his passing. On the day of the funeral, I had to plan out my day accordingly so I can show up to the funeral on time; finish all my errands by 2:30 pm, then get home by 3:30 pm and get ready so I can leave my home around 4:30 pm to make it to the funeral home at 5 pm, the funeral was held at the Rivera Funeral Home Inc. located at 104-02 37th Ave in Corona, Queens. After I finished my errands and got home, I tried looking for my black dress pants that I thought I had somewhere in my closet, but I couldn't find it. I didn't know what else to wear because I didn't own another pair of black dress pants nor black dress shirt, so I had to improvise and go dressed black clothes that I have in my wardrobe. After I found the black clothes and put it on, I called a Lyft to the funeral home, and we all paid our respects.

I was supposed to go dressed in a black t-shirt with a black zip up sweater on top of it, black dress pants, and a pair of black dress shoes but I went dressed completely differently. I wore a black t-shirt that was *pre-shaped* to fit me slim. On top of the t-shirt, I wore a black hooded sweatshirt that had a well and slim fit. For the pants, I wore a pair of black Carhartt Work in Progress aviation pants. The pants were altered and tailored to not have the pants stack at the bottom and look to have a straight fit. The sneakers I wore were a pair of Adidas Yeezy Boost 750 in the triple black colorway. The sneaker was a high top and the only sneaker I had that was completely black.

After arriving home, I had to take a quick shower because my whole body was sweaty which I feel made me have a bad *odor*. I made sure to scrub and rinse my *hair* as well as my *skin*. After the shower, I brushed my *teeth* for a second time in the day just so it can get rid of

any bad *breath* I know I had. After that, I started applying lotion to my *skin* to moisturize it and I put on a Calvin Klein cologne to freshen up my scent. I had to look my best as it was an important moment in my life.

These sneakers are important to me because I wore them to my dad's funeral. Wearing sneakers felt like the thing to wear to his funeral because me and my father had built a connection through sneakers. Throughout elementary and middle school, my parents and I would go sneaker shopping and my dad would be the one to help me out to pick out a sneaker. I also looked forward to those moments because my dad would always be working so it was like the only time, I got to do something with him. I'm pretty sure he would like what I wore because it's who I am.



About the Author:

David Bautista was born and raised in Elmhurst, Queens.

He's currently a student in New York City College of Technology. He's aiming to get his bachelor's degree in Business and Technology of Fashion. Upon graduating college, he hopes to start his own clothing brand or a business within the fashion industry.