

**\*\*\*Please be advised this is the draft version of this book.\*\*\***

# **The Makings of Me**

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## PREFACE

No matter how it may seem, it is not easy for me to speak about myself.

It is not easy to express myself when it comes to the emotions that are equipped with impulses that affect me mentally, physically or emotionally (mind body and soul.)

Ask me and I'll tell you or wait for me to feel like I can give myself without being misunderstood.

But the quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson, "To be great is to be misunderstood" is the way I want to view myself. There's no reason I can't be great when I put value into all I do. Words don't come easy to me if not in a figurative way, and not everyone speaks the language and that's more explaining I must do before I feel I can. But I show action. I show sentiment in s y m b o l s, syllables, people.

For now, fashion, predominately streetwear, is one thing that I am certain helps with myself development to being able to fully express myself in all ways on all days. Although there is more I must learn on my path of making it a career, I know the roots of my passion. Without realizing it, it was there for me in times of my life when I had to learn lessons on how to survive what we call life. The key to survival is in happiness which can't be

pure or full if you are not happy with you. The clothing from the outfits I hold dear in the circumstances they appeared is helping me to be happy with my presentation to not only the world, but myself. And how I love to be able to express so freely.


**BRAVO**

Applaud You



## “MY-MY” & “MIQUA”/ “MYRA”

The start of my Lipton tea ritual by nana when I woke up every morning for elementary school (my grandmother)  
My coffee one by Grandma Louise at her Harlem coffee table (my great-grandmother)  
My *hustler's* IQ from my mom  
And a girl who always has something on my mind  
For example,

 Like, why my name just had to be mine?  
Why I really, seem to feel like my zodiac sign?  
My Libra scale is *forreal*,  
so, I guess only in time  
I'll balance out, mellow out  
And enjoy the sunshine



I don't remember much from the picture of me in a pink *knitwear* with my two ponytails and pink barrettes, but I know that it was during my Barbie phase that eventually shifted gears to more boyish toys like WWE action figures and hot wheels. Maybe because me and my cousin, Davon, were born 20 days apart, so our interest just had to be similar. But, those were the days I was the girl my mom might have thought I would be. But she been gone for almost 20 years.



## **The Proof Is in The Archives**

**The navy-blue cardigan I bought from Denim and Supply that everybody thinks was a dress cause they saw it in *greyscale*. I had my legs showing too. And short navy classic Uggs, because I do like Uggs.**

**I had my glasses, those were my confidence. I love my hair straightened so there goes the wash-and-set.**

**I was in Atlantic City with my friend who I call “Shrimp” and her family, whom are another one of mine. She was the photographer in our connecting rooms. She said I looked good.**

**I felt awkward but I wanted to show who I could be. But, only when I feel comfortable and still like myself.**





## ***My First Pop Out Fit***

Although for about two years I cried “Transfer”, I spent my entire high school experience at John F. Kennedy High School.

It was located by Marble Hill in the Bronx. Although the address was 99 Terrance View Avenue, we had to go near the U-Haul on West 230<sup>th</sup> Street. Those who attended the campus can’t think about without visualizing the long trail of a strip you had to walk to get to the first set of doors to the building, which weren’t always open, so you had more walking to go.

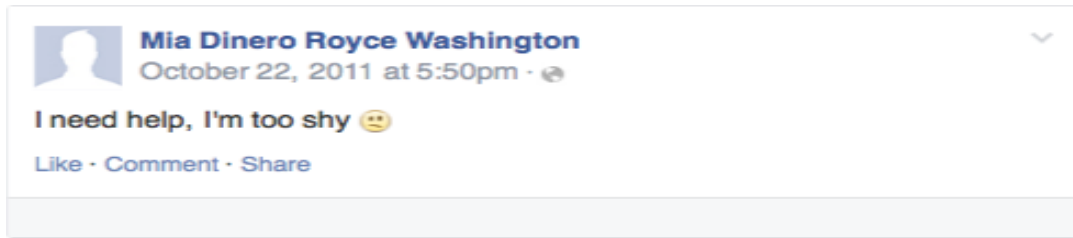
Out of all things we tried to change about the school, the one thing we were successful with was getting rid of the uniform policy because 80% of the school didn’t follow it. I didn’t want to leave in June and feel like I had nothing but a time of horror and disappointment. I for sure didn’t want to look like it. I knew my vocal connections needed work, but my visual connections were easy when I looked the best versions of myself in the moment of interaction. *Swag* was just the ice-breaker.

A couple of things that made you “*swaggy*” was Jordan’s and streetwear, which both had my attention. My Jordan obsession had just happened; once they dropped the white and cement gray *Retro 4s* I started getting pairs as they released. Snapbacks were trending in fashion and the Obey brand was popular in the school. Facebook was also *popping*. Sometimes you come across people on there you don’t know but still add and accept them. You forget how weird your connection began and what led you to add a complete-stranger. But, you shake it off when they were cool and customizing snapback brims with fabric and sewed a white cheetah print fabric on to a red Obey snapback for you. The “*swaggy*” outfit came quick with some red Obey sweats that had no pockets. I wore it with this white t-shirt that had “Gap” in black letters.

I felt like the “*flyest*” thing on Earth because of the way I planned the little details in my outfit, even though I realized later the shoe’s print was elephant, yet the cheetah brim matched the color scheme perfectly. I couldn’t wait for the right day to *pop out* in it and when I did, I felt like I succeeded in giving myself something to look forward to the next couple of months, even if it was just coming from getting dressed.



## KITH



It was something about the store sharing space with Atrium at 644 Broadway. I don't know if it was the motion-censored access or the interior within that had the white pencils poking out an entire wall and the high-top all white Nike Air Force 1s dangling from the ceiling. All I know is that the box logo makes me stop in my tracks every time I see it. This was one of the *dopest* clothing/sneaker stores I ever seen and that spontaneous visit was the planter of my fashion dream.

I was with nana because my freedom didn't come yet since I didn't have a job so I was still "babied", which made me feel like my growth was being stopped a little (but now I'm glad I was on the strict side because my problems could've been worse.) My peers had *put me on* to Soho and I got her to take me on the B train. She didn't mind the local (and longer) commute if we were on our way there and back. I didn't know the transit system yet so I couldn't tell her that waiting 3 more minutes would save us 10 down the line.

I was wearing my prized Obey snapback with the cheetah brim a stranger from Facebook customized for me before scamming was the mindset. I was also wearing my friend Mookie's grey Polo t-shirt that she let me borrow from her house one day. I had to either be hot wearing a hoody with no shirt underneath or made a mess on my own because I never borrowed from my friend's closets.

I also had on my favorite pants, these green cargos I bought from American Eagle. It was a few shades lighter than forest green and had two big pockets near the thighs and two short and narrow ones on the side big enough to secure a Blistex. Everyone was wearing cargo pants in high school and I found my pair that fit me the way I liked. It was hard being a tomboy and liking boys and feeling like both sides of my personality can be seen because both were true but always seemed to hold me back because of one another. I had to look a certain way to be taken a certain way and it always caused me to overthink expressing myself to people. These pants were comfortable and had a feminine touch because they were loose or fitted in the right places. But wearing

it now, I wasn't just interested in guys so that no longer was a big concern of mine. I also had my *white-cement 4s on*.

Something about the aesthetic instantly felt so real and excited me. It was like I walked into a lab full of *starter packs* and one piece of apparel equipped with another piece always looked different than it did with another. There's no telling who a person is with Kith. Who could forget the day discovering a store that felt like the right place to go when I was going to a setting that I can create my own first impression.

And it was just what I needed. Ronnie Fieg made this brand for his friends and family. He also made a store in the back of a store that served as and still is my therapy room and stylist. I walked out wearing a lot more than day.

**kith** [κ-ιτη] I. "friends" portion of "kith and kin" which means friends and family  
II. make known or become known (Archaic Scottish)

# DESIGNING THE DESIGNER

A time when *swag* meant everything to a city kid; it was all about how many glances you can catch, who dressed the best and your Jordan game.

With all things that had to be considered, turning 18 was another important reason I felt I had to make a statement that not only was my entering “adulthood”, but, also broadcasting my membership to millennial consumer consumption, aka *hypebeast*.

Oreo, an *associate* to my good friend (at the time) was the first person I knew around my age who not only wanted to be *fly* but be seen in pieces that couldn't be found, unlike the *retro J's* on the feet... so he designed and created products of his own. This was my first time around somebody my age with an idea that I would've thought was just a dream, but he was making it reality. He did that when he pronounced that “*Swag is Dead*”.

I thought it was the best way to describe how I wanted to show my fashion sense, but not feel like a clone in doing so. I decided I need *S.I.D.* to be added into my birthday outfit. But unfortunately, he sold out so I needed a plan B.

There was influence from Kanye West's Givenchy Spring/Summer 2012 Ready to Wear show outfit at Paris Fashion Week: Black blazer, white tee, black leather pants, black *infrared 6's* and some gold accessories. I took to Express for a blazer and found one with a leather collar. I explored my mother's pile of pants to find a leather pair that resembled Kanye's. And how fortunate I was that the Jordan Retro 7s Gold Medal Pack released, giving me the black and gold feet which made accessorizing even easier to do with my mom's gold 24K chain and Rolex.

I came up with the idea to design my own shirt and hat. I used my Photoshop knowledge to design and Custom Ink for the production. I was used to basic customization where I got my name on my exclusive stuff. Somehow, I had to do it in a mature and sleek way. Instead of using my conveniently short first name, I decided to use the nickname I got during my last

year of high school, which was only a couple months ago. *MTG*, short for “Mia The Great” was my confidence booster. I placed the abbreviation in bold print and broke down each letter in script underneath. I went to LIDS and got *MTG* in gold embroidered on a black snapback.

Drake was also an icon then. He *repped OVO* all the time (October’s Very Own). It always excited me that somebody at his level was born in my month and creating some praise for it. The symbol to represent *OVO* was an owl and that’s what I felt was missing in the back of my shirt with Oct. 4 as a nice addition.



# The. Hate. U. Give. Lovers, In. Future. Experiences, Comes Back to You.

I was already into bandannas.

Maybe I'm a *tribal* person?

But I got into 'Pac and read his work in "The Rose That Grew from Concrete". I liked what his *tat* **actually** meant. My classmate in Kennedy, Denzel, always used to say I had it *tatted* on my stomach too because the guys thought I was more aggressive than the other girls. When "*Thug Life*" was mocked on me then I used to be annoyed but now I feel...or I did, until I wore it on a white jersey with "MTG" and "94" on the back and strawberries were thrown at it.

IN the moment, it felt like stone because I was doing EVERYTHING to show I was wearing my heart on my sleeve too. And I still felt rejection for what made me "feel" happy. Love is one of those things that makes me happy in all aspects and dimensions. Everything has a love to it, even a hate.

♪ 'Gotta stay high to never get that low ♪

But that's a sharp edge of my spear now. I washed the stains of Seward Avenue away; a place that I felt would ruin me before it changed me. I had to rise, and I did.

I did it the same morning I put on the jersey with a color matching paisley bandanna with the leather pants from my OVO 18<sup>th</sup> and my white/black/red Retro 3s. My *'fit* was spotless and I knew I was *feeling myself* because I had my staple curly hair and having it makes me feel myself the most. I even took pictures at my *twin-at-the-time's* house and posted it.



From my mind 2 the depths of my soul  
I yearn 2 achieve all of my goals  
And all of my free time will be spent  
On the 1's I miss I will lament

I am not a perfectionist  
But still I seek perfection  
I am not a great romantic  
But yet I yearn 4 affection

Eternally my mind will produce  
ways 2 put my talents 2 use  
and when I'm done no matter where I've been  
I'll yearn 2 do it all again - Tupac



*When Life Rocked My Bells, And Showed Me Life Ain't Easy*

From successfully going into my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday ready

to get down to business in the fashion and designing world, I was more ready than ever this year with an e-commerce up and running, a few products mass-produced and sold out. Being ambitious to find the best opportunities to get the quickest exposure and then it happened... a 2-Day concert starting the day of my birthday, “Rock The Bells”, with all my favorite artist performing and a chance to meet and greet them all. That started the pressure of what I was going to “stunt” in This year.

Working at BX Sports during its prime helped me to begin with my sneakers. I do believe strongly that the power to make or break an outfit is within the shoes. I would check what was in shipment every day until I came across these black and white Shaqnosis which must’ve played on its pattern/name and literally hypnotize me because those were “birthday behavior material”.

Instagram soon proved its purpose of connecting because I was following a guy who did custom-made garments. I explored his page to all the well-made and high quality leather jackets and sweat suits and immediately knew I needed something cut and sewn.

I thought I was going to a concert so I wanted to be comfortable. Sweatpants and a *tee* it was... but not the average look you imagine. I gave my measurements and designer’s freedom and he came up with white leather sleeves on a black tee and black sweats constructed with white leather making up the entire front.

Although my outfit was original, I felt it was missing my own creative design. Since Fall was the season of bombers, I brought a black satin baseball jacket online, went to 53<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to a printing company I’ve done business with multiple times and took everything to the cleaners to be stitched together. Thinking of which to use design to use was kind of hard until it hit me since I was bringing *merch* to the meet and greet for my favorite artist I’ll rock what I wanted to see my favorite rapper, J. Cole in... which was this Indian Chief with a bandanna on his forehead like ‘Pac.

Unfortunately, I looked exactly the way I wanted but the concert

was cancelled and I was stuck with all the merch. That was the first time I could remember trying to give my all for myself and it ended up screwing me over. I was at a broken point but then I ended up somewhere in Harlem that I still don't remember where I was, but from the photoshoot pictures I was somewhere on a bridge with rows of lights on at night.



## Setting Twins: The Consequences of Oversharing

Right before the start of the summer I got a bigger role in my job which required me to move from the BX Sports under the 2/5 line on Simpson to the flagship location on Pelham Parkway and White Plains Road. It was a bigger store and had a larger selection of items. Also, I no longer had to wear the uniform work shirt, therefore full-creative expression was granted.

I also got over a toxic situation, so I was definitely, *living my best life*.

One day in my new store a shipment came from a brand that made me focus on streetwear even more because I wanted all of their apparel in my wardrobe. Publish, used a quill as its logo which also spoke to the side of me who loved writing poetry and songs.

Joggers were the trending pants of my fashion culture and this Hawaiian floral pair arrived in only a few size 32s so I had to put one aside for myself. Once I got my paycheck, it was mine.

I told my boy-best friend about the pants all excited and when he seen them he wanted them too. I didn't mind. We both didn't know what to wear with them. After further observing the other apparel on the shop floor, I spotted a white mesh t-shirt. And then the idea came to get some all-white Air Force 1s. I

wanted the high-tops since they were the only style with adjustable straps but we didn't carry that version in a grade school size 6. That's my *forever issue* for having a preference for menswear and not having a man's figure or feet. But, I had an outfit now. I told my boy-best friend about the *fit* all excited and then he wanted them too. I didn't mind him to wear it, but at the appropriate time.

But, he wanted to try and put it on before I did. It was my outfit and I didn't want to be discredited and look like the imitator when I was the originator, so I was forced to *pop an outfit out*.

It was a nice day outside and I had to work. We were doing something together after I clocked out so he came to pick me up. Everyone thought we were doing a photoshoot since we were dressed alike. I felt like an idiot even though I like what I created.

And from that moment on, I kept my mouth shut and just got dressed.



♪ It's my birthday, I'll get high if I want to ♪

I was now accustomed to outdoing my outfits on

my birthday and needed my entry to another decade to be elevated, just like my age (20.)

The *Jordan Futures* came out in this 3M silhouette that I knew had to make its way out on October 4<sup>th</sup>. I'm not sure how quick this outfit became meaningful and interesting but to play off the name of the sneakers I knew "Past" and "Present" was missing.

I decided to get a shirt and jogger pants created with one word on each in 3M vinyl in Japanese (I always admired the culture from young). Although from top to bottom I felt the outfit explained itself but I wanted to add on to the concept, and I did with a black leather snapback I got embroidered with the word "Peace" translated in Japanese also. I placed it on the forehead to symbolize a peace of mind, which I wanted to have and when you see the flash I was "enlightened".

My former *twin* threw a last-minute campfire party for me and it was *several heads* that came to *chill* with me. I wanted to be *extra* and switch into my *birthday pop out 'fit* so I had on one outfit and then left her backyard, went into one of many doors in her house to the basement and came out of these doors that took you from the basement to the backyard and surprised everyone.

Of all the time, I put into wanting to celebrate myself since I've been lost so long during another's destruction, I still got into an argument with my *best friend* that should not have happened; but it doesn't matter what it was since he left me to go do what he wanted to do. The conversation got my temper to the point I stormed off cancelling my *get together*.

I came back to just my former *twin* and the night soon turned into a basement *cyph*. I realized a lot: I was holding myself back trying to include people in parts of me that were for myself. If I stopped what I love for who I love, I'll never love myself.





## *It Happened & Lasted*

I started hanging out with my soon to be girlfriend and it's been months and the days we've went without seeing each other, has been none. She claimed to not be into girls like that but the way she was with me and my other girl-friends, my "*twin*" didn't do some of the things she did or in the way that she did it.

I wanted to shoot my shot for something more but I wasn't going to come out with it directly because I didn't want to set myself up for *another L* that could've been avoided. She was single though and didn't have a Valentine and neither did I. So I asked and she said yes so I had to show her in my own way that I was *feeling her* as more than friends.

I got us matching track piped jerseys made with our initials and in a Japanese style. Mine was scarlet and white with *Akatsuki clouds* placed at the bottom of the jersey and a laurel wreath on the right shoulder.

It was one of many little things I had prepared for the day... like the flowers delivered to her door that morning in which she *spent the night* at my house, so her family received it. We went to the movies with our siblings and she got mad at me because I didn't give them a limit. She eventually taught me couponing and how to say "no".





## Off the Market & Fashion?

It was a couple days after Valentine's Day and I was in a good mood because it went as planned, and I even got more out of it than I was expecting. I was *def* in a happy place. Out of the networking I started to do with my music that led into fashion, I made a bond with the one and only Frank Love. He was known everywhere by everyone and knew how to dress and had a personality that made him even more loving, so I was all for collaborating creatively. He wanted to start a movement, in which he did with Fashionably Crack. To sum it up, it was a team of good vibes who got fly, *simple*. They were doing a photoshoot on West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and I went to support. It was my first time in that area. My hair was in these *loc twists* that I had for the first time and it made me feel different but I liked it. I didn't know what to wear for the *shoot* other than my white and legend blue *Jordan Retro 11s*. One day *out and about* in the city I went into Forever 21 and saw a blue and white color-blocked short sleeve shirt. The blue wasn't the same but was close enough to not notice easily. I went to get the shirt right before they started. The jeans I didn't want to wear but drastic times called for these light blue faded Publish denim.

I dragged my Valentine, Rita, with me. She even came with me after to FC Johnny's *crib* in *Co-Op*. Things seemed a bit different with us after that day but I didn't know what was going to happen. But, I was following my passions and spending time with those that made

me happy and supported my journey to success. There was heavy energy although I had focus on one, I was open to other options. But that ended after today, when she got others to back off and now it's obvious why.



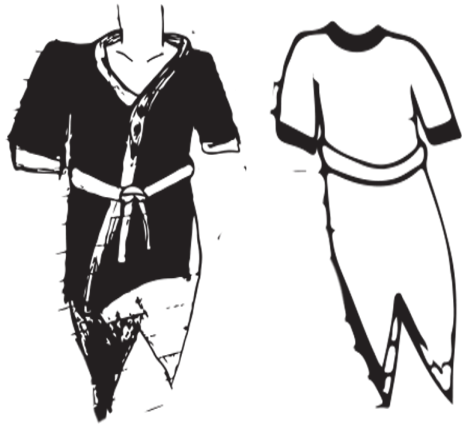
## Breaking Out to Let You In

I was getting so used to having night classes at City Tech. They were usually in the Namm building on 300 Jay St., but the Midway, which was another long block further from the train, always found its way on my schedule. I happened to be in my selling class with a classmate, named Walter, who shared one day that he brought fabric and made his own shirts. I already wanted to begin networking with peers and speaking to him about creating for me was soon a real gi.

I always admired Karate and wanted an outfit that took me into the dojo even when I was never in one. I always loved the films, not only for the storylines and combat, but the clothing they wore at different scenes. Jackie Chan was my favorite actor because I never watched a bad movie with him in it. One of my favorite Chan films was “Rumble in the Bronx.”; I took mine to Atlantic City.

Red, black and gold are some of my favorite colors and color combinations. The colors complemented the theme I was going for so they were also painted on my white and military blue *Jordan Retro 4s* with the supplies I got from a sneaker customizing warehouse-styled shop on 23<sup>rd</sup> street near 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I let somebody do it who I obviously put too much faith in. He not only did an amateur paintjob, but made me travel distances in Brooklyn I never traveled. The almost 2-hour commute wasn't enough because I still had to wait what felt like another hour in the cold for him to finish. I was already having a bad day with all the thinking about everything else being wrong. I also didn't get to see my girlfriend until after 12 and I was *too in my bag to get out*.

When I got to the Harrah's Hotel I was feeling better and took some nice pictures even though it had to be done from a certain angle so the flaws weren't noticeable.



*PEP 'N STEP, PEP 'N SPRAY*

MY GIRLFRIEND JUST TURNED 21 AND WE, ALONG WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND A COUPLE CO-WORKERS DECIDED TO *HIT UP "VACCA LOUNGE"*. GIRLS WERE FREE UNTIL 12 BUT WE MADE IT THERE BEFORE AND HAD A SECTION RESERVED. UNFORTUNATELY, EVEN WITH THE LIVE DJ, *POPPING CLUB SCENE*, AND NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO CAME OUT TO CELEBRATE WITH MY *GIRL* SHE WAS ANNOYED AND IT SHOWED. I FELT OBLIGATED TO *NOT ONLY MATCH HER FLY BUT LET IT BE KNOWN WHAT TYPE OF TIME WE WERE ON*. SHE HAD ON A WHITE BUTTON-UP SHIRT DRESS, BLACK CARDIGAN AND HEELS WITH A TIARA. TO FIND MY RIGHT "FIT". I WENT TO THE KITH STORE IN BROOKLYN. I LOVED THE LOCATION UP THE BLOCK FROM THE BARCLAY'S CENTER ON FLATBUSH AVENUE SINCE THE ASSOCIATES WERE ALL SO *CHILL* AND THEY DIDN'T SELL OUT AS FAST AS SOHO. I BOUGHT THE "EMBRACE / YOUTH" *TEE* IN WHITE THAT HAD THE BOX LOGO UNDERNEATH THE WORDS WRITTEN IN BLACK, BUT IN SILVER. THE BACK ALSO HAD SOME SYMBOLS TOWARDS THE BOTTOM. I WANTED TO LOOK CLASSY BUT STILL CAN DANCE ALL NIGHT I HAD SOME BLACK BLOW-OUT DENIM JEANS I GOT FROM ZARA AND THIS GRAY <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> TAILORED JACKET I GOT OFF BOOHOO.COM TWO MONTHS PRIOR. BEFORE, I NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO WEAR WITH IT BECAUSE I FELT I STUCK TO STYLES THAT I ALREADY KNEW LOOKED NICE ON ME ALTHOUGH I WAS INTERESTED IN A LOT MORE. THE SILVER FROM THE GRAPHIC TEE REMINDED ME OF MY *FUTURES*, SO THOSE SNEAKERS MADE ITS WAY ONTO ANOTHER BIRTHDAY "*POP OUT*" LIST.

IN THE MIDST, OF EASING MY GIRLFRIEND UP, I WAS *LIT*. I WAS DANCING TO EVERY SONG AND MY SECTION WAS *LIVE TOO*. THERE WERE VIEWS FROM EVERYONE, INCLUDING MAINO WHO WAS ABOVE US AND ENTERTAINED BY OUR *TURN UP*.

OUT OF ALL THE *SPOTS* IN DYCKMAN, EVERYONE, INCLUDING MY AUNT'S *EX* WAS AS AT 416 WEST 203<sup>RD</sup> STREET. THE COINCIDENTAL, YET VERY FORTUNATE POSITIONING NEXT TO A LATE-NIGHT FOOD TRUCK THAT HAD MILK THAT WAS NEEDED AFTER I GOT PEPPER SPRAYED BY THE *COPS* WHEN *CORNY EXES* CAN'T SEE YOU WITH SOMEBODY ELSE AND EVERYONE HAD TO GET INVOLVED.





# OCTOBER

The past couple of months been hard trying to regain parts of me that made me who I am. Everything I did for me seemed to be impossible to do now, but I wasn't about to quit because I deserve to keep my happiness. I've been getting up 8am everyday this summer to not get in until 12/1 the next day working to pay bills, live and eventually splurge on my wants, which is always clothes. To my discovery, there was an *OVO* store in Soho, a few blocks around the corner from Kith, on Bond St. The entrance was hard to find because the store is placed on the side of the building it is connected to in a way that you would walk into the window looking for a door. You know you're close because you see the gold owl logo on the glass.

Turning my notifications on to receive post alerts from the brand's Instagram, I made sure to have the *funds* set aside to grab my size in the white tee that had "October" written in a red Justice League-styled font between two parallel red lines, causing it to look like a striped section.

I've been networking and *hustling* a lot and met this girl at *Pride* I had on Instagram. She was having a "girls' night out" party and invited me to stay and sell drinks. I haven't been out in a long time and I was going alone to make money so I knew I had to look a certain way to get the attention I wanted at the party. Plus, summer was coming to an end and I wanted to have a good time. The shirt was bold, which I knew would put me out there. And it did, because from the time I got to her East Tremont house, I was called October all night and still doing business with the girls I befriended at the party in the actual month.

