

The journey of a teenager



By: Olivia Elias



As a kid growing up in El Salvador I didn't really have much to wear due to our family being poor. I was raised by my grandparents since my parents had migrated to the United States for a second chance in life. In my town we always had our annual carnival event where we would celebrate our culture. My grandfather who is a big role model for me had been working hard the week before the carnival and had saved up enough money to buy me my first pair of black leathered boots and the denim skirt I liked. He gave me the gift on the day of the carnival and ended up wearing it that same day. My grandfather passed away two years ago but I will never forget this not necessarily because of the gift but for the hard work my grandfather had to endure to put a smile on my face.



When I was in middle school there was this young lady named Blerina who used to bully other kids because they were not rich like her. I remember she was in my science class and would sit behind me and my best friend. Blerina used to make fun of me because of my weight and clothes. She would dress with ugg boots and hollister clothes which she embraced that since those were considered high quality brands back in the day. She began to pick on me for not wearing those brands and her bullying caused me to go home one day and ask my mother to buy me something from those brands so she could stop bullying me. My mother not knowing decided to purchase me my first pair of ugg boots and two long sleeve shirts from hollister. I wore my garments to a school field trip we had at the Intrepid on pier 21. Blerina did not stop picking on me but I learned to just ignore her and move on with my life. I hope she grew out of bullying people as well since hollister is not as in anymore.



My mother decided to only have one child and that was me but when Steven was born he became like a brother to me. Steven is the son of my mother's brother, tio Rene. Ever since he was born I was the one who took care of him which allowed me and him to have a really strong brother and sister bond. I remember when he got older and we were able to make out what he was trying to say he had asked me to take him ice skating. On my fourteenth birthday I asked my mother to take steven and I to Aviator Sports and Events Center. My brother had gifted me the cheetah print shirt you see me wearing in the picture above. Even though it was my birthday I wanted him to also feel special and enjoy with me. Steven now lives in Virginia and will be turning 13 years old soon, time flew by too quickly.



Outback Steakhouse in Dyker Heights, Brooklyn was a Saturday night go to restaurant for my father and I. The blooming onion appetizer was the first thing we would order as well as the buffalo wings. I was about fifteen years old in this picture which was when I began exploring my fashion style. The dress I am wearing in this picture was a dress my mother had bought for me but did not fit me properly since it was short on me due to my large buttocks area. Summer of 2012 I began to lose more weight than I had intended which meant all the clothes that did not fit me were going to fit me. I look at this picture and it brings me back memories of when my father and I had our get togethers and maybe not to talk about life but instead to eat. Now we both work everyday and only see each other at night when we get home.



I am sure you've heard of the traditional coming to age party hispanic families have for their daughters which is called Quinceanera. A Quinceanera is an event were a girl is celebrated for turning fifteen which means she is becoming a young lady. As a kid who was able to experience her friends and cousins having parties I was excited for the day that I would be celebrated as well. Well i never had a quinceanera instead I had a sweet 16 which is the american version of our traditional event. Although my sweet 16 was not a big party due to us not being financially ready for it it was actually celebrated at Outback Steakhouse were I invited my closest friends and family members to spend four hours with us at the restaurant. My mother being the amazing

woman she is wanted me to wear this dress that way I would still be able to experience what it is like to wear a fancy dress. The four hours I spent at the restaurant were enough for me to have a great time with everyone I loved and loved me. My mother and I talk about it now and we both agree that we saved us a good amount of stress and money.



I look at this picture and think wow my first boyfriend was really lucky to have such a beautiful woman like me in his life during the time we dated. I cannot recall the exact day but this picture comes all the way from 2013 when I had my one month anniversary with Roman. Roman was my first love, the boy who caused me so much pain and anxiety but also introduced me to the word LOVE. I remember being extremely nervous and did not know what to wear. Believe me when I say this, I honestly picked the first thing I saw which turned out to be pretty nice. I walked down the street to meet him and I remember him saying “WOW.” That “WOW” made my legs melt and my heart to beat faster. Now Roman and I are nothing but good friends and he apologized for everything he did.



Being a woman who had suffered with weight problems her whole life has been really tough to deal with. Fourth of July is such a big holiday in America due to its significance. My family and I used to celebrate the Fourth of July in Manhattan beach, Brooklyn every year where we would barbecue the whole day. I remember that I was the only one out of all the women in my family that would not wear bikinis or any type of bathing suit instead I would just wear shorts and an oversized shirt. On July fourth of 2014 I decided to do something differently and decided to wear short shorts with a bandeau top. I walked around the beach proud of my skin and body. Me being able to change the perspective that I looked too fat or I did not look as pretty as the skinny girls did was a proud moment and till this day I still embrace my body and the shape of it



Hello seventeen! Soon eighteen. August 6th, 2014 was the day my parents surprised me with a birthday dinner at a Peruvian restaurant in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn named La Granja. We arrived at La Granja and there was my family alongside my closest friends. When I walked in everyone kept complimenting me on how beautiful I looked with my pink dress. This pink dress made me feel so sexy and confident that I did not want to take it off. I even had the waiter who was a handsome young man flirt with me a little which made my boyfriend at the time, Roman (remember him?) very jealous but I mean look at how great I looked, how could the young man not try to holla? I look at the dress now and wish it still fit me but I am not longer seventeen and my body shape as changed once again.



PROM!!!! What a beautiful event. I never got the chance to go to prom in middle school due to certain circumstances but i was determined that I was going to attend the one in high school. I consider my prom good and bad. Why? It was fun shopping for a dress, getting ready for it, fun in the party bus with my friends, dancing crazy with them as well. What was bad about it was that my boyfriend at the time stood me up and decided to break up with me. I remember being excited to have him see me in the dress and have him say “WOW” once again and take those cheesy/corny prom pictures. My friends made sure I had a great time which surprisingly I did. I look at this dress now and of course the first thing I remember is the bad.



My first day at work and sold a \$1000 pair of Chanel Bijou sunglasses.

My very first day working at Sunglass hut in the fifth avenue flagship location was such a beautiful experience for me. I had met this beautiful woman by the name Camila who was a tourist from Spain and was staying in New York for a week. Being my first day at the job I was extremely shy and wanted no customer to come in. I had very little experience in the selling department and had no game plan on how I was going to approach people and sell them \$150 and up worth of sunglasses. My manager Dilenny reminded me of the tips they had given us during training but because I was so nervous I had forgotten everything. I remember Camila approached me and asked if I spoke spanish? I answered, yes I do. She began to introduce herself

and I did the same. Because she spoke spanish I felt more comfortable and brought her to the more expensive area which we call it the luxury room where brands like chanel, tiffany and co, Dior, D & G, Gucci, Fendi, etc. were located. I had no idea what the Chanel Bijou was but began to make up a random story about the qualities of the sunglasses which had Camila interested. I sold the pair of sunglasses within the hour I had started my shift. Camila walked out of our store happy and I stayed feeling confident and proud.