

One Year At a Time:

Birthdays and Everything In-between

By: Ruth Jordan

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About The Author

This book is about a 25 year old Caribbean American young lady from
Brooklyn, NY by the name of Ruth Jordan.

She will take you on a journey though her personal relationship of associating the form of
dress and body modifications she undergoes related to each birthday as a young adult,
starting at the age of 16; as well as significant events that have help shaped her love for fashion.

To and fro with an army of three. My mom, stepdad and I drove out to New Jersey Garden Mall to go to the dress store on the lower level of the mall, I walked past the store many times as a young girl. I'd say to myself when walking past every time, "One day I'll get my sweet 16 dress from there and I'd look like Cinderella".

That day I peeled through so many racks until I found her. It was lilac with a corset bodice and tulle bottom that seemed to go on for days. A slightly darker shade of lilac for the floral appliqué that graced the mid section, it was accompanied by beading and sequence of lilacs, translucent, and holographic throughout the dress. I looked for my size, and could only find two sizes too big, and one too small, I was heart broken. I pleaded that we could take the dress in to be resized but my mom refused.

I never felt so defeated. We left to mall to go back to Brooklyn, so I took a nap in the car. I was woken up two hours later to be rushed out the car and into a mall I've never seen before. After walking around for 10 mins I saw an awning that looked so familiar it was the dress store's other location! I ran in and under two mins I found her again, my dress. My mom handed me the cash, moments later at the register this was my sweet sixteen dress and no one else's my day would be perfect.



All I had were these eggshell colored shorts I found at a boutique on Kings highway in Brooklyn. They had orange stitching throughout, and small circle gold rivets along the front pockets. When I folded up the cuff of the shorts, a color show appeared, red, orange, green, and yellow in different shades in no particular order. That detail is what sold me, but I just couldn't find a shirt that I liked.

My mom came though the door with groceries a day or two later, and told me to put them away. Of course I didn't care to do so I simply placed them in the kitchen and returned to my room to listen to Hot 97 when I heard a yelp from the kitchen. "How'd this get here!", exclaimed my mom. I ran out of my room to see, and she pointed at the groceries laughing as I thought something happened, so I started to unpack them. Low and behold a Polo Rugby bag was disguised in the third grocery bag I began to unload. I began to scream thank you like a broken record, and ran to her room to kiss her.

The week prior I took a trip up to Soho, walked all the way up to 14th st., and stumbled on the Polo Rugby store. As I looked through I saw many things I loved, but thought it was insane to pay \$55 and up for just a shirt! But my mom being thoughtful as usual,



picked the perfect a orange and green rugby shirt that complimented the shorts. Polo rugby was on trend, so my fit was perfection and flee.

18

Coming of age I thought, adult hood oh yes, finally legal 18! A little black dress will be perfect for my birthday dinner. It was at a Hibachi Steakhouse in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn that all my best friends and family was invited to. With it being senior year and having senior dues just paid, and prom & graduation around the corner, I was looking for the best cheap knock out dress I could find.

Store after store walking up Soho from Canal st. and nothing, until I saw her. She was on a rack in one of the Necessary Clothing stores in Soho. I never understood why they had three locations on Broadway. It was a black cocktail body-con dress fitted just for me. Its was tight, to fit my at the time size 6 figure. Everything was just right with a bit of whimsy on each shoulder hosted a collection of gold and silver appliqué trinkets. From flowers to beads to coils of material it was perfect to suit me. And I wore it again for my after prom outfit talk about a highway robbery steal this purchase was. Nothing better than getting an amazing deal when shopping.



Humbled beginnings

It was my first photo shoot for my brand. Sounds crazy right “MY BRAND!”, yes I did start it with my at the time best friend, but it was my thought of the name, and the logo design that started this Big Bang. I was 18, studying to be a computer engineer, and I couldn’t stand it! I wanted to be designing and creating in another way my family didn’t particularly care for, FASHION. It was almost a dirty word that I couldn’t get enough of. After some time of finding the right vendor, we printed about 20 shirts, but had to figure out how to get everyone to see it. So we decide to do a photoshoot with a hand full of people we knew that were popular in other circles to generate some hype on social media.

I dressed myself in one of our logo T’s, with blue jean shorts, opaque stockings, a black blazer, and all black DocMartin Boots without yellow stitching. I was ready to conquer they day and everything that it would bring me. My vision was being as true to myself and what the brand meant to me. Amongst Bushwich’s Graffiti Art Walls in Brooklyn, NY, my close talented friend Epic had my brother Ty, two twins from Baltimore, Maryland, my ex, business partner and I jump in front of his lens, to be captured.



I couldn't be happier fulfilling what I finally felt was right.
Effortless, it was fashion. To top it off, my ex brought custom MCM
leather goods he made for us to wear, we were FRESH !

19

My first finals week was now over and my friends were back in town for the first time and I could be happier for my birthday to arrive. I open my closet to grab a black sleeveless sheer chiffon crop top, and a sheer black tiered skirt which had a black leather sash to tie at the waist.

The show stopper of my outfit was my Jeffrey Campbell Spiked heels. It was also the first time I purchased my first Luxury bag myself with my own saved money. I don't think I've had a more proud fashion moment. It made my outfit perfect. A medium size classic monogram Louis Vuitton bag. Glee!



Fall into Winter

This was my second collection of my brand Modus Operandi, and following against my better judgment, I joined my partner in creating screen printed designs on clothing with catchy sayings. I requested we go the route of creating our garments from scratch which was overlooked. It meant she would have to get her hands dirty, my business partner that is. There was usage of Roman numerals & various fonts as well. Golds, blues, hot pinks, sea green, tan suede, black spikes and black leather, I don't think there was the color in the rainbow and we didn't have to in the collection. It was confusion.

With all that being said, I wore a fluid floor length gray maxi dress I found while thrifting. The dress twisted in the wind In every which way as a strutted around in my heel-less Jeffrey Campbell's. Unlike my dress, my JC's were everything but bland in the color department, they featured a peacock print design over both shoes, and like I said they were missing a heel. Statement number one, check. And last but not least, the most chic vest in my closet to top it off. It was a classic brown and black fur vest with a twist because it was cropped. I almost left it in the store, I thought I didn't need it.



Statement number two, check. These pieces put together symbolized me at that present moment, the need to be minimal, the need to

standout, and the need to preserve & reinvent classic. Much how I want the brand to be, but with a partnership you can't always have it your way.

The showstopper, making it to 20 was a rough, between classes, and family drama this year I was bearing it all. The mesh insert in this white number was nothing but sexy. The black leather choker at the neck was so simple but so sexy I loved it too.

It was my first birthday working at Aspen Social Club on 47th st. in the Time Square area. All of the bartenders though I was turning 25 and they were shocked to know that I wasn't even legal yet! I was working with this team for a few months and I was already apart of the family, the GM even told me where to get a Fake ID so that we could party the rest of the weekend, but u didn't take him up on that offer.

There were so many bottles and so much dancing, I have no idea how i made it home. But my dress was still white and my boyfriend was laying next to me the next morning.



Goddess

I was at work, lounge spot called EVR on W 39th st., it was right off of the Time Square area. My cousin's boyfriend was my boss, and we hosted an after work party every Friday evening between 5pm- 9pm at EVR, before we had to head over to Aspen Social Club on 47th st. to start our night life hosting. I was taking to one of the Coat check girls when I heard "Hey I'm short one model!". It was February Fashion Week in the city, and we had two designers showcase their designs in a runway show scheduled for 7pm.

I ran over to help, as in to find out what type of girl they were looking for if I could grab one from the patrons out by the bar. Little did I know I was the girl they would choose! They showed me what the missing model, i.e me, would be wearing and it was gorgeous. It was a strapless dress, the bodice was disguised by sequence of gold and orange followed by blues, and greens. The bottom of the dress was a deep ocean blue, floor length, and moved with grace. I threw it on and grabbed my peacock heels I kicked off an hour ago.



Just when I thought that was it, a glam team came to braid my hair and put on some pink lip gloss. It was after all of this the designer graced my neck with a choker filled with the most heavenly white feathers. I felt like a GODDESS.

The year that is the true right of passage 21. I prepared for this birthday for a whole month! I started the bleaching process of my hair in April from black to blonde, so I wouldn't damage it in time for the end of May. I called the process sun powered and began to look for dresses online for my weekend of fun. I saw a playful body con dress which was black with white daisies all over. I placed it in my basket as one of the dresses that I would wear for my birthday weekend.

It embodied my youthful girly side that I wasn't entirely ready to give up & wanted to hold onto. I wore this to a bar on 38th st. in the city that my cousin's boyfriend begged me to come to. He said "staying home to ring in 21 is boring put on one of your dresses we leave in 30.", and so we did. I was pretty upset my cousin was still in Thailand as this was an important birthday.



21.2

The very next day I was having a party at the club I worked at called Aspen Social in Time Square. One of the dresses I ordered was the exact opposite of the modest daisy dress I wore the night before. This baby was girly as can be, with a short tulle skirt that made my legs look like they went on for days, cap sleeves, black of course . She bared almost every thing as the deep v in the stoped an inch before my belly button and in the back about two inches above my waistline. It was perfect as I shared this day with my friends and family dancing into the night. And my shoes That I refused to tell anyone where they came from made the night. They were over the knee boots that had snake skin straps crisscrossed all the way up the leg. They were to die for, and i'm sure many died as I told them no into as they asked about them.

I was blissfully happy, as my cousin came back form Thailand that afternoon and surprised me. She's literally my right hand man as you would say, so when I partied too hard that night



she and her boyfriend made sure I was taken care of. I just love
that I have loved ones that look out for me.

2 Days

I had the craziest idea, I thought to myself “You haven’t designed anything in some time, maybe a dress fo New Years!”. Looking back at it now, it was insanity! I came up with this magical idea 5 days before New Years Eve so I figured ok better act fast.

I headed to Mood Fabrics on W 37th st., I looked for anything off white, eggshell, anything of that nature. I had a chain in mind that I wanted to make and thought that would be a prefect color to watch it bounce off of. I searched of tule to make a grand pleated skirt, and silk to make the bodice. Last but not least, I searched for a velvet ribbon to act as a sash around the waist.

Two long days, 48 hours for of work, pinning and draping against my mannequin, sitting at my sewing machine and cursing to the heavens as I just wanted to give up. Thank god my Aunt Pat saved me in the beginning by telling me to draw out my pattern first. The dress fit like a glove and the trick zipper I put in stated the whole night. I was surrounded by my loved ones at my favorite bar Midwood Flats in Flatbush, Brooklyn. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Happy New Year!



My princess crown wasn't working my perfect navy blue fitted skinny strap dress couldn't write the wrongs that two of my guest made. The dress code was dressed to impress no sandals no denim, so simple at least I thought so. My rooftop birthday dinner was in shambles because two of my guests weren't wearing the proper attire and I didn't want to exclude them from festivities. Like what the heck! Jeans, sandals, and crop tops with all their skin showing, are you serious girls?

We went to TAO downtown instead where I had some amazing Thai food, while surrounded by nine of my favorite people, plus two clowns that didn't know how to dress properly. Thank god my best friend and my cousin hopped in a cab with me back to Brooklyn, and took me for shots by my favorite local bar Midwood Flats as we joked about the night being trashed. Tequila!



My Jordan year, get it Michael Jordan, 23, my last name. I didn't care to do anything big, as the day before I went to my favorite rap group's concert, Flatbush Zombies at Webster Hall on 11th st. I just wanted to see my friends, eat some food, and drink a few tequila shots! It was a linen navy romper nothing super special or extravagant this birthday wasn't really a big one. We met up at Black Tap Kenisha, Raphael, Jazmine, Latasha, Natasha, and I, where we got some great food and milk shakes.

We made our way to a little bar on 9th st. all way in Noho and met Arissa, and Andrew there. While there the sweetest lil lady they gave us shots for three dollars a glass, and then a round on the house because it was my birthday. Some more friends joined us, Terry and his brother Teck, but at 11pm I was over it all, I just wanted to get back home and to my bed.



Silver satin short and sexy. The stress had a deep V in the front which I had to use tape to hold so that I didn't expose myself, and sort bell sleeves that flew in the wind as I walked. This was 24 I was happy to be back in school doing what I love and it showed.

Dinner at Verlanes in LES, since we missed our reservation at Son's of Essex, and off to some club nearby I swore had the best music. I accidentally flashed a guy walking up the stairs as I didn't notice the bottom of my dress was oh so short. Once we got inside I realized it was a club I've been to before, they just renamed the place. Ugh!

"This is gunna suck!", I thought to myself, until I saw one of the DJs I use to work with back at EVR. I went up to the booth and he said to me, "Hey isn't your birthday today, I saw it up on Snap!". I grinned for ear to ear. He and my cousin NaTasha whispered to each other, and 15 minuets later a Patron bottle with sparklers came out along with a Birthday Shoutout. I was ecstatic,



I tried to reach for the bill and all my guests slapped my hands away.

It was a great night, but I had way too much to sip. I learned a valuable lesson that night, don't mix!

25

I was so down in the dumps. A quarter of a century, and what have I done with myself, it felt like nothing. I really don't want to celebrate this year at all, because I didn't feel celebration was needed. "You only turn 25 once!" Is what everyone kept saying, but don't you only turn the proceeding year combing once, "You only get one for each dummy.", was my response every time. I played around with ideas form at least two weeks before I settled on a Hotel Party.

I saw the most Mortisha Adams from the Adams Family, styled dress I could find. It was black, deathly, lethal, BLACK, with beading everywhere! A deep V-neckline which was oh so sexy, and the selves were an elongated bell shape that was so dramatic. I bought some rose gold Steve Madden pumps to go with and I felt like this was it, I now wanted to celebrate. There were black and gold ballon that littered the hotel suite, and a gold 2 & 5 balloons which was the highlight for me. I love balloons! I had



elementary best friends, middle school, and high school all there, family, and ex's.

All in unison playing board games, cards, no lies, truth or dare, and sharing stories. It was perfection all of my favorite people all in one place to celebrate me. It was humbling as we went though the night giggling and dancing to trap music. Quarter of a century, it sits just fine with me now.