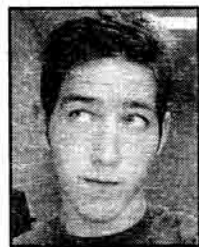


Dressed to Impress

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A&E EDITOR

If you haven't caught on yet, I wear the exact same thing every single day. The exact same thing. In the



WHERE THE
HELL IS
WAYNE,
MAINE?

summer it changes, but once we hit that sixty degree mark, it's back to the same old same old: the same fashion jeans, the same blue wool sweater, and the same black Sketchers. It's not that I'm unoriginal, and it's not that I'm poor. I'm comfortable.

When I was younger, back in grade school, getting dressed each morning was a big deal, and I was known to wear something different as often as once a day. Being the youngest in the family, I got inundated with hand-me-downs. In most households this put the littlest ones two to three years behind current fashion trends, but since my older sibling was a girl, and since the last time boys wore dresses was 1907, I got put two to three generations behind current fashion trends. Some call it retro. I called it lame.

Every morning brought a new attempt to dodge the girliest options before me and put together an ensemble that was not only fashionable, but practical as well. Above all I needed to be utterly unsuitable for the cover of 'Seventeen' magazine. I needed something with sense and sensibility. Something without kittens, rainbows, pink, pandas, or puff paint. Somehow, I could never do it.

Invariably, due to a lack of clean garments or otherwise, I ended up in embarrassing situations; the first day of 3rd grade and a purple "My Little Pony" sweatshirt come to mind, for starters.

So, when college started I tried the safe route; I tried wearing a new

outfit every day. I tried doing laundry, changing my bed sheets more than once a semester, and showering, even shaving, as much as once daily.

And yet I found myself unfulfilled. I could never wear my favorite outfit all the time, and I was never comfortable in anything else. I had a slew of cotton sweaters, but they always shrank and deformed in the wash, and I had to stick my arms inside, grasp the bottom edge from within, and stretch it past my knees, only to watch it shrivel up again past my navel. I couldn't win. Sleeves were always at that awkward length above

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the wrists; not quite short enough to be too small; just enough to make me self-conscious. T-shirts were too common, polo's too pretentious. It's not that I had very few clothes, I simply had a very few I could wear, and it seemed those I could wear were always dirty. I needed a new plan.

I decided, somewhat on a whim, that wearing different clothes each and every day was not only frivolous, but wasteful and too demanding of my attention and resources. I would pick one outfit and one outfit only, stick to it, and see what happened.

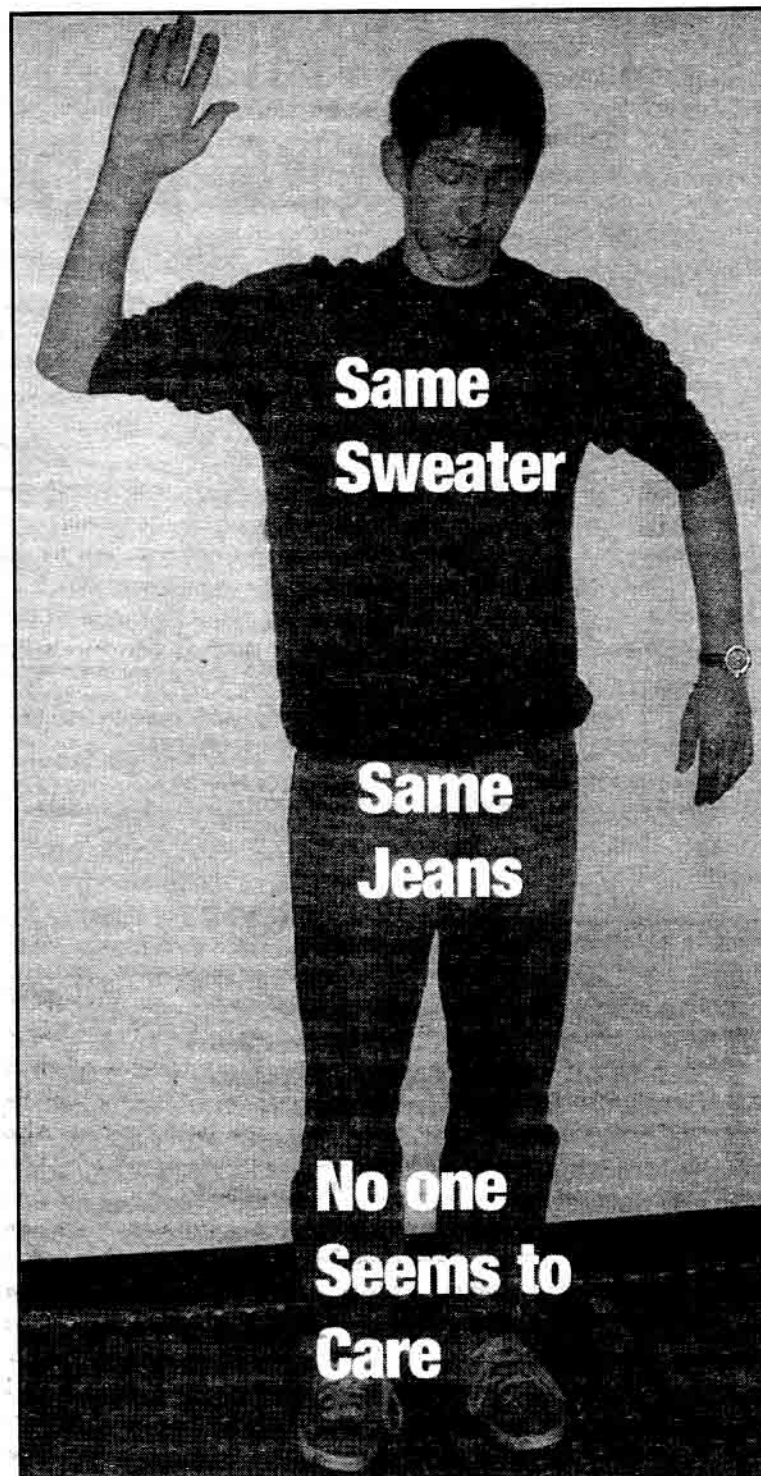
On the very first day of my 'transformation', no one noticed. It was understandable; as far as anyone knew, this was just another ensemble in the long series of ensembles I'd put together day in and day out. Another day went by, and then a week. Still not a soul glanced up from their mochachino-half-cap-latte to take

notice. I couldn't believe all the thought and preparation I'd put into my appearance on a daily basis for the past 19 years. All for these people who were either too busy to notice my stagnant wardrobe. Either that or they imagined I had just returned from a record smashing series of torrid one-night stands and had yet to return home to change. The disinterest of my friends and acquaintances got me thinking. What else could I get away with?

Showers were the first to go. Since puberty I've started my day with a hot shower and a clean shirt under the pretense that my peers could pick up on the distinction. After a few days of no showers, I found that while my friends didn't appreciate it when I cleaned myself up for them, they certainly didn't appreciate it when I didn't clean up for them. Pervasive 'man-scent' followed me wherever I went; for an hour in my 10:10 I thought it was the kid next to me, until the kid next to me in my 11:15 smelled suspiciously familiar too. I spent the rest of class trying to smell my own armpit with my arms folded tightly about my chest. I never realized how difficult it is to fold your chin past your collarbone. After a few minutes, the muscles in my neck began to spasm, so I decided to just go for it and raised my arm to get a closer smell. Gross.

I did indeed smell like man, and what's worse, the teacher now thought I had a question. I made up something about French existentialism, mumbled a witty comment or two about Sartre, and sat silent and smelly for the rest of class. On the way back to my room, I put "Shower" back on my "Things to Do So People Don't Hate You" list.

I had similar mixed success cutting out basics like toothbrushing, nail-clipping, and, perhaps most disgusting, hand-washing. You'd be surprised how much gunk a pair of hands can acquire in a week.



Despite my failures, the "one outfit plan" is still a resounding success. Most people don't notice, and I'm free to focus my energies on other pursuits than wardrobe, like cold fusion, for example. I'm close, real close. What's the point in switching clothes everyday, anyhow? There's always going to be that one set you

wish you were wearing, the one you're saving for Tuesday when that dreamy physics major is in your Bio lab. Why not wear that every-day? I do. I'm a little dirty, and just a little sub-par smell wise, but if anything I'm dressed to impress. Always.