

A Day in the Life of a Suburban Consumerist

It is late Saturday morning and I am still in bed. I don't want to get out of bed. But I probably should. But my bed is so very comfortable. Why does anyone get up in the morning? I can't figure that out. Eventually, with a colossal effort, I manage to drag myself out of bed.

The first thing I do after getting up is tend to myself, because, in my opinion, my appearance is always priority number one. I shower, brush my teeth, and do all the hygienic things that need to be done. I spend half an hour choosing my outfit for the day. Outfit planning is probably the most demanding form of art. It takes immense finesse, immense patience, loads of creativity, passion, and persistence, and an intellect of great capacity. With so many looks, so many emotions to appeal to, it can be hard to pick just one. Planning an outfit quickly turns into a battle of the mind: this side of me wants to look this way, but that side wants to look that way. Add in the fact that you can't wear the same outfit twice, and the difficulty becomes almost insurmountable. You're forced to be flexible, and you learn early on that you can never go with the first outfit you pick out. You can always do better. It really is the case that the ability to put together articles of clothing so that they match and create an overall attractive appearance takes much time to develop. But I have years of experience under my belt.

Since today's a Saturday, I don't have to go "learn" in "school." I hate learning. Why would anyone want to exhaust their brain talking about politics, or science, or math, or history? Such wastes of time and words. I prefer to talk about things that actually matter to me, like other people's appearances and relationships. These things actually affect my life. Anyhow, gossiping is far more fun than any school subject. And it actually can make you a better person by allowing you to make new friends. However, you have to be careful because you can also lose friends through gossiping, a truth that I very much despise. You have to gossip just enough to be the life of the conversation but not enough to make any enemies. Again, here I have years of experience.

I normally don't eat breakfast because it takes time away from tending to my image, but today, since it's Saturday, I'm starting the day off right with a wholesome meal from Starbucks. I arrive and get in line with all the other eager patrons, all donning their name-brand clothing and with their noses buried in their Apple iPhones while they patiently await their "hand-crafted" beverages. Not being one to go against the grain, I do the same, deciding to peruse my Instagram feed while I think about what to order. Will I get an "artfully roasted" coffee, latte, cappuccino, macchiato, mocha, or frappuccino? Or maybe even a hot chocolate? A sign says the "luxurious" hot chocolate is for those with a "sophisticated palate." I want a sophisticated palate. I order the hot chocolate.

I sit down at one of the tables. The place is getting crowded; I am lucky to have found a seat. I take a Snapchat of me sipping at my hot chocolate and send it to all my friends. Only half my face is in the picture, though, because I only Snapchat my good side. I finish my hot chocolate and go to throw it away, but then I decide not to. Carrying around a Starbucks cup has major brand appeal, no matter if it's empty or full. So I keep it and leave Starbucks.

I return to the car my parents bought for me. I have big plans for today. I drive to my friend's house. I pick my friend up, and we head to the mall. It's pretty busy, but that's what makes it fun. Our first stop: Foot Locker. We walk in, and one of the employees practically runs up to us.

"Hey! Welcome to Foot Locker! I can help you with all things sneakers. I'm a certified Sneakerhead!" he says.

"I need some new basketball shoes for the upcoming season," I say. I play basketball for my school's team. I don't play because I like the sport, though. I really only play for the social status it gives me. I like being seen as the athlete.

"We got Nikes over here, Jordans over there, and some Adidas joints on the far wall. Call me over when you know what you want," the employee says.

My friend and I look at each section. All the shoes have flashy colors, lots of branding, and high price-tags. In fact, all the shoes are pretty similar, just with different logos. I'm not really a Jordan person, though, and Adidas is more for Europeans, so I settle on a pair of Nike Hyperdunks.

"You want the Hyperdunks?" asks the employee. "I'm not gonna lie, they're pretty dope. But I suggest the LeBrons. You'll be breakin' necks all day with them joints."

I pick up a pair of LeBrons and compare them to the Hyperdunks. Both are made of primarily plastic, both have check marks all over them, but the LeBrons cost about double the price of the Hyperdunks.

"What's so good about the LeBrons?" I ask.

"They're LeBron's shoe!" the employee exclaims. "Look, here's his signature." He points to some scribbly-looking design printed on the shoe.

"Get the LeBrons," my friend says.

I buy the brightest LeBrons I can find.

After checking out, I take a Snapchat of me holding up my new shoes in front of Foot Locker. Feeling that I need something more to commemorate this momentous occasion, I take another picture and post this one to Instagram, Twitter, and, just in case anyone still uses it, Facebook. Then, I put on my new shoes and have my friend take a video of me dancing in them. I upload part of the video to my Vine.

With our documenting over, we head over to PacSun. I can't resist the California vibe, so we spend an hour in the store. We leave with six bags of clothes. Each. After PacSun, we go to Hollister, American Eagle, and, though it's rapidly losing popularity, Abercrombie. At each store we buy more clothes until we can barely carry everything.

"Want to put all this stuff in your car then come back in so we're not carrying it around all day?" my friend asks.

"Good idea." We drop off the stuff and hurry back into the mall. I am hungry now, but not quite hungry enough for a whole meal. My friend is a bit hungry too, so we go to Auntie Anne's for some pretzels. I am again faced with the impossible decision of what to order. I see a large poster featuring cinnamon sugar pretzel nuggets with the caption "Mini but Mighty" next to

them. I want something mighty. I order the cinnamon sugar pretzel nuggets. My friend follows my lead and does the same.

I take a selfie of me eating my cinnamon sugar pretzel nuggets and post it to Twitter with “#auntieannespretzels #sogood #yum.” My friend takes a Snapchat of both us and sends it to everyone we know.

Our next stop: Kohl’s. I need some more new shoes, but some casual ones this time. I pick out some Sperrys. On the way to check out, my friend and I get sidetracked by some clothes displays. We pick up some more shirts to buy. I remember that I need new gym shorts, so we go to the sports section.

I see a pair of black shorts on sale. They are just plain black shorts with a white line down each side. Nothing more. I then see next to these black shorts a pair of Nike shorts. They are plain black shorts with a white line down each side, but there is also a white Nike swoosh. They cost twenty dollars more than the on-sale black shorts. I buy the Nike shorts. And take a selfie with them.

We walk out of Kohl’s loaded down with bags. We come across an acquaintance from school.

“What’s up, you two?” the acquaintance asks.

“We’re just hanging out here at the mall, buying some new clothes,” I say.

“Wow, that’s a lot of stuff,” the acquaintance observes, pointing to our bags. “How are you affording all that?”

“My parents’ credit card,” I say, holding up a Visa.

“Cool beans,” the acquaintance says. “Well, I have to get to work, so I guess I’ll see ya later.”

We part ways, but not before taking a Snapchat of all of us together. My friend and I decide it’s time for some real food, so we walk to the food court. We see a Sbarro, an Arby’s, a McDonald’s, a Subway, and a Chipotle.

“Where do you want to eat?” I ask my friend.

“Um... Well, nobody goes to Sbarro or Arby’s anymore, and McDonald’s is for fat people. Subway and Chipotle are both pretty chill, though. I wish we could go to both of them.”

We are yet again faced with an extremely difficult decision. Eat Subway or Chipotle? Both brands are equally acceptable. The food doesn’t really matter. So which do we choose?

“I have an idea,” I say. “Let’s eat Chipotle now, then go to Subway and get it for later!”

“Great idea!” my friend exclaims.

We get Chipotle, find a table, and sit down. We each take selfies with the food and post them to Instagram, Twitter, etc. Then we take Snapchats of each other and send those out. When we finish eating, we go buy some subs from Subway. And take some more Snapchats.

Having visited all the good stores at the mall, we drive to my friend’s house. We are going to a concert tonight. We spend two hours getting ready, then drive to the concert. It’s an Iggy Azalea concert. We wait in line, hand over our tickets, and find our seats. Her opening song

is “Fancy.” We party hard at the concert until 1 o’clock in the morning. We take a lot of selfies all the while.

On the way home, we look for a suitable place to stop for food, decide Panera is an adequate brand, and eat there. More Snapchats. We talk about the concert and how great it was, how fabulous it was. Iggy Azalea’s music is iconic of her times, we both agree.

I drop my friend off (yes--I am driving past curfew), and return to my house. I anticipate my parents being asleep, but that is not what I find. I pull in to my driveway. My mother comes running out to my car, bedecked in PINK brand pajamas.

“Something is wrong with your father!” she shouts. “Something is wrong with him!” She starts running down the street. This is very strange, I think. But my mother is known for her explosive mood swings, so I just go inside. Best to let her work out whatever she is going through herself. I don’t want to be exposed to any diseases or anything.

“Dad, I’m home!” I shout. I don’t see any lights on. I turn on the kitchen light and set my keys down.

“Dad?!?!” I ask. No response.

I gather up all the bags of clothes and shoes I bought today and head upstairs. No lights on up here either. I go to my room and put all my purchases on my bed.

“Hello?!?!” I query. Now I hear a faint noise coming from my parents’ room down the hall. I go out into the hallway and see, under my parents’ door, a dim glow. I am frightened. This is all very strange. I move closer to the door. The noise is even louder here, but I still can’t determine what it is. I don’t know what to do. I take a Snapchat.

I shudder in fear. I shake with trepidation. What is wrong with my mother? Where is my dad? What is happening in my parents’ room? I realize there is only one way to find out. I must open the door.

I open the door.

I raise my iPhone to take another Snapchat, but something stops me. I look around the room. The room is dark, except for a ring of candles on the floor, in the middle of which sits my dad, practically bald and wearing nothing but orange robes. He sits cross-legged facing away from me. He is meditating, the source of the noise I heard.

“Dad?” I ask, shocked beyond belief. “What’s going on?”

“I have converted to Buddhism. From now on the family will imitate the austere lifestyle of the Buddhist monks.”

I run for the street.

The End