

WARNING

This article is based on opinion. It can contain sarcasm, derision or incongruities. Protective clothing may be necessary when reading.

I saw one of those makeover shows the other day. I was going to *click* by until I realized what it was all about. I saw that it was a couple, biker dude and his dudette, being "re-done". I could feel the excitement and anticipation from the audience. I held my breath as the curtain was pulled back and ... guess what, after cutting their hair, hiding their tattoos, and changing their clothes; they looked better and younger before they had the makeover!

Oh yeah, the audience "ah-hed" and "ooohhed". Why? Because they fit in now, they had been changed into "one of them". They could sit in the audience and no one would look at them out of the side of their eyes; no one will change seats to avoid being within reaching distance.

Now, I ask you, what fun is that?

That is just the quandary; people are always trying to change a biker to look "un-biker-like". I understand sometimes and in some places, a certain look is required to develop the "perception of trust" or to "fit-in". At the same time, I am pretty sure

there are bucket loads of people in the world who can tell stories of being ripped off by "un-biker-like" dressed people. Probably more of them than the ones who can tell stories of being ripped off by a biker. I mean, if I were a scammer, I would dress to impress my pigeon, not to intimidate them.

A significant part of the biker experience is based on the attire. Of course, there are those nonverbal elements too. Watch bikers in their natural surrounding as they greet each other; make eye contact, body language and posture. Ah, but the clothes and the grooming and accessories (garnishes I like to call them) make or break the "look". As I was told repeatedly growing up, "Never underestimate the power of a first impression". This is of course how I learned to dress according to the "situation" not according to fashion.

I hear some of you out there thinking, "People shouldn't judge you according to your dress". Get real and grow up! Of course, people do it and so do you!

Every living breathing person does it even if they don't admit it. OTHERWISE, WHY HAVE MAKEOVERS! Job interviews would be over the phone. I'm not even going to discuss dating. And yes, those guys who have to hold their pants up to walk are judged. (My question has always been and remains, why do the "alleged" criminals on COPS al-

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ways wear those pants and then try to run from the police? It just does not seem too bright in my opinion to have to hold your pants up while trying to climb a fence or sprint. I mean, fine, you want to look like your pants are going to fall off, by all means, feel free, but plan ahead. If there's a possibility you might have to run any distance as if your freedom depended on it, maybe rethink the wardrobe?)

People make astonishing judgments about a person based on their attire. Of course, sometimes one merely opens their mouth and the assumption vanishes. Nevertheless, that first gaze at you in all your duds splendor and you've sold yourself into a certain "rank" on the world's ladder. Based upon your appearance, good or bad, it will be extremely hard to overcome that first impression. Many of us wouldn't be welcome at our place of employment looking like we do on a motorcycle. Some of us are lucky enough to be able to dress as we wish at our office, but many more cannot. So for work we dress in our "Corporate Drag" so to speak and when we ride our motorcycle we dress in "Biker Garb".

With that said, we bikers know that we must carefully plan the image we want to project while maintaining our smarts with the safety

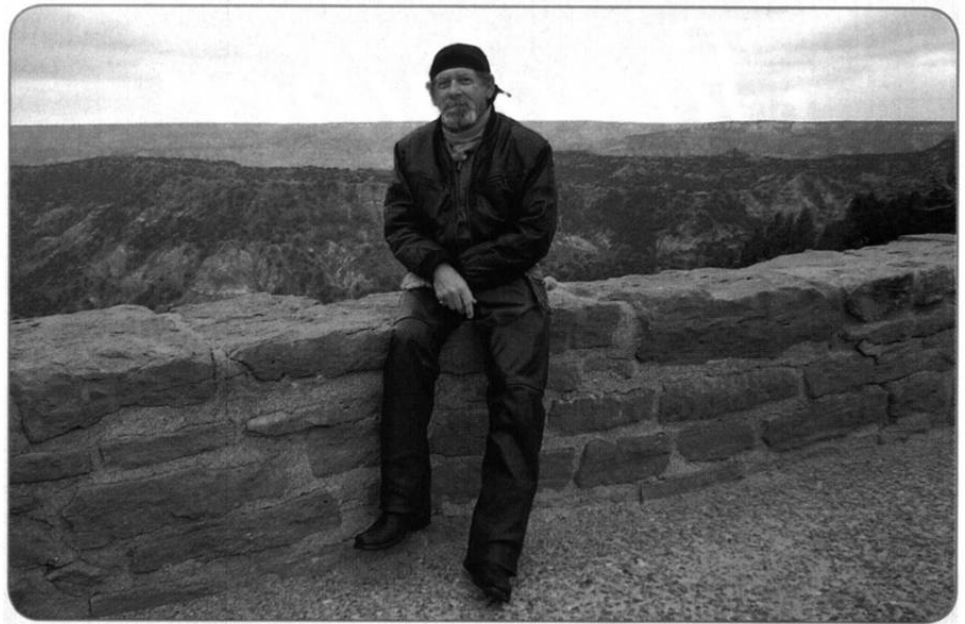
and riding comfort factors, always important but sometimes not taken into consideration.

Here's a checklist I got off the internet for how one should dress for success in business or for an interview and except for numbers 6 and 9 (because I say so) I think you can just do the opposite and you have the biker look pretty much down as long as you throw in some leather and maybe a tattoo:

- 1. clean and polished conservative dress shoes**
- 2. well-groomed hairstyle**
- 3. cleaned and trimmed fingernails**
- 4. minimal cologne/perfume**
- 5. no visible body piercing**
- 6. well-brushed teeth/fresh breath**
- 7. no gum, candy, or other objects in your mouth**
- 8. minimal jewelry**
- 9. no body odor**

In this "anti-professional" get-up, you will get the chance to scare off little old ladies rather than waiting until they get a load of your charismatic persona. On the bike is the time to wear the clothes that need ironing, have burns or holes and you can't (or shouldn't) wear anywhere else.

The unfortunate thing is just like some scammer who wants to con you out of your money; it's pretty easy to "gussy up" like a biker. A person can put on the "look" akin to one putting on a costume. One way to tell the difference between a look-a-like and a real rider is to ask them about riding. If it seems all of their rides lead, well nowhere,



or not more than two to five miles from home, probably not so much a biker.

Of course, there are exceptions to the standard biker outfit. I find that as I grow older (no comment needed here), I lean more towards comfort and protection when I ride and care much less what anyone thinks about my clothes. Actually, I can say I couldn't care less but I don't think it would be possible for me to care any less. We ride very little in the city any more so when my friends see me they aren't seeing me on a motorcycle or dressed to ride. We plan and take much longer rides outside of town so it's really important to pack smart not for the way I want to look but the possible weather and events I might be attending or activity I might be involved with. (City riding is just not my thing anymore. I don't enjoy it because people in cars are trying to kill me. I'm not sure but I think it might be a video game or something with the goal being to run over bikers for bonus points.)

Generally, the act of *being* a biker is enough to get you noticed anyway. In addition, what you wear won't really keep you from being accepted in the realm of other bikers. In that dominion, we accept each other on another level that one cannot really explain unless you are a part of that scene. Nevertheless, in the kingdom outside our little empire, what you wear can, will and does determine how you are accepted as is evidenced by the fact that they never have a show to make over any one to look like a biker; it is *always* the other way around.

You know what I think?

That nice neatly made over biker couple went home, took a long look in the mirror, at each other and changed back into their old clothes, grew their hair back, and rode off into the sunset on the bikes.

They really didn't look too comfortable in those pressed and starched duds anyway.