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“Times... they are a changin”

by  
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A recent visit to a local shoe store provided the fodder for this week’s article. While looking in the sneaker department I happened upon a pair of old sneakers apparently left there by the purchaser of a new pair... at least that’s what I thought they were. These shoes were faded in color as if they had sat in direct sunlight for several months, with frayed edges at the top of the shoes, and any tread they might have had on the soles was long gone. Looking to either side of these particular shoes I noticed there were other “used” shoes filling the shelves all around me... surely these weren’t new shoes... but, of course they were. I didn’t see any that had been designed for men so hopefully this was a “woman” thing, but one can’t be sure nowadays.

I know fashion is an ever changing phenomenon, always moving faster than I can keep up with it. If my fashion sense was compared to the new Super Trains that travel upwards of 250 miles per hour, it would be cataloged as one of those pump action, hand operated work carts of the 1800s. I just don’t know fashion, nor do I appreciate all the changes that assault us each year. One of my daughters-in-law is always threatening to report me to the fashion police.

Frayed clothing, of course, is not new. Back in the 70s, while raising three sons I was made aware of just where fashion was going. I had just purchased each of them a pair of new Jeans, Lee brand of course, just the right color, just the right taper, and just the right fit in the crotch... perfect in every way. I had done good!!! If I’m not mistaken, which I probably am, I had paid \$40 per pair for them and told my boys to take good care of them because they were to last for a long while.

The next morning they were off to school wearing their new pants and I had to admit they looked good in them. After school my oldest came through the back door and he looked like he had been attacked by Edward Scissorhands... just above the knee on the front and right below the butt on the back someone had taken a razor to them. I looked for signs of blood and asked my son who had done such a

thing to him, “Let me know and I’ll call his parents and demand they pay for the damage.” My son lowered his eyes to the floor and softly said, “I did it myself.”

After a few seconds of awkward silence I asked him the obvious question while trying to keep from blowing my stack, “Why would you ruin a perfectly good pair of expensive, brand new, just purchased, first time worn, jeans by cutting them to pieces?” With no hesitation he answered, “Because that’s what’s in style Dad.”

To add insult to injury this scion of sartorial splendor then asked his mother to put the jeans into the washer with an extra dollop or two of bleach so they would get white bleach spots all over them, which she did. The next day as he left for school wearing the jeans I saw a couple of dark grease stains strategically placed and asked him how they got there. He informed me that after his mom had bleached them and dried them he had taken them out to the garage, scraped off some grease from the under the lawn mower and wiped his hands on the pants. When I meekly asked my wife why she didn’t get upset she just said, “Would you rather he be considered a dork by his friends?”

Today we pay even bigger bucks for clothes that look like they have been soaked in dirty bleach water, dragged through mud, tar and bramble bushes by a herd of wild mustangs, then hung on a clothes rack without even pressing them. It seems the more wrinkles... the more they cost.

My biggest embarrassment these days comes when we take a collection of old clothing to the local charity store and they tell me they can’t accept them because, “they’re not worn enough!” Who would have thought?

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