



KRT

Confessions of a suburban hipster

WHEN I TELL people I'm a fashion columnist, their eyes widen and they start asking me sartorial questions I'm more than happy to answer. Then they ask assumingly, "Where do you live in the city?" With hesitation, I answer, "I don't live in San Francisco, I live in Dublin."

When I say the name of this suburban oasis, 90 percent of people cringe a little and exclaim, "That's far!" The other 10 percent have never even heard of the sleepy town.

Every time I'm at a social event in the city, I subconsciously dread this question, because my suburban residence compromises my status on the hipster hierarchy.

According to the semi-reliable Internet source Wikipedia, the word "hipster" can be traced back to the 1940s. It is a slang term to describe "young, well-educated urban middle class and upper class adults with leftist or liberal



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Dressed

social and political views and interests in a non-mainstream fashion and cultural aesthetic."

Well-educated? Sure, why not. Young? Check. Middle and/or upper class adult? Check. Liberal social views? Kind of. An interest in fashion and cultural aesthetic? Check and check. Urban? That's when people, including myself, start to speculate.

The term urban hipster makes most people think of Carrie Bradshaw living in an expensive brownstone,

drinking cosmos and prancing around a concrete jungle in uber-expensive shoes, rubbing elbows with the social elite.

My life is kind of like that, but there are some minor differences. I live in a reasonably priced townhome, drink SmartWater and drive the traffic-less streets where moms in Juicy Couture tracksuits roam free with their state-of-the-art strollers and issues of *Us Weekly*.

Many people have said that I dress like I live in the city. I look at this in two ways. It can be a compliment, meaning I look chic. Or they could be referring to those days I look haggard and homeless.

Many of my friends have given me a hard time about my suburban hipster lifestyle. They say things like, "You should be living in San Francisco," or "I don't see how you can live in suburbia. It's so boring!" Then there was one "good" friend who called me

a soccer mom, which really boosted my self-esteem.

What I really hate is when they say the word "Dublin" like living there is a crime. I always feel the need to defend my town before anyone utters their first suburban insult.

Sure. I love San Francisco and would live there if I could afford a decent place. This brings me to my first argument as to why I live in the suburbs: I'd rather pay reasonable rent for a spacious room in a beautiful commercially built townhome than a live in a cramped studio that's outside the means of my modest journalistic salary.

This brings me to my second point. By saving money on rent, I have more room on my credit card to create lingering debts to Barneys, Bloomingdale's, Zara, Jeremys and an assortment of stores in Hayes Valley. As a result, I build a wonderful

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wardrobe that gives the chic illusion that I do live in the city.

Lastly, I am at peace with my suburban lifestyle. At first, I was really self-conscious about being a suburbanite. Now, I am not ashamed to admit it. I spend about half my time in the city, going to events, shopping, eating at restaurants and hobnobbing with friends. Coming home to my place is a quiet escape.

Still, just because I live in a quiet community that is filled with families doesn't mean I want to settle down

and become a homebody. Just because I enjoy mingling with soccer moms at Trader Joe's doesn't mean I am a sell-out. And yes, I enjoy taking my little nephew to the park to play, but that doesn't mean I haven't lost the ability to have stimulating conversation at a metropolitan tapas restaurant.

Before you start hating on my lighthearted elitism, you should know that I have experienced the "urban bohemian life" when I lived in Austin. I had a cramped studio with rotting walls in the bathroom, leaky pipes, cracked mirrors and thin walls that were an audio portal to my neighbor's promiscuous lifestyle.

I'm not saying I never

want to live in the city. In all honesty, I have been spoiled by the convenient amenities of suburban living. I am in close proximity to big, clean grocery stores, my gym, a movie theater and yes, T.G.I. Friday's. If I did move into the city, I would have very high expectations for my limited budget.

I qualify for all the criteria for a hipster except that I live in the land of desperate housewives and husbands. Even so, I don't consider myself a hipster. I am just a guy who spends too much money on his clothes and frequents urban hipster territory.

When it comes down to it, my place of residence doesn't define who I am — my fabulousness does.

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