

I know I'm a lucky man. The luckiest: my wife obviously loves me. Why else would she put up with me?



Right now, we are in the throes of moving down here – I've been on the job about three weeks and we're looking forward to being settled full time, but at the moment, life is distracting, to put it mildly.

I must admit, while I am okay in a crisis, I am not great with large scale multi-tasking, nor do I often see the devil that is in all details, even though I know he's there laughing and waving his fork.

Fortunately she does.

I also must admit that while I am stalwart, studly, brilliant, funny, darned good looking, and most of all, modest, alas, I am not perfect. I'm afraid among other faults, I am a bit color blind. This means my Beloved is constantly arching her beautiful eyebrows, flashing me that klieg light smile, and gently saying, "Sweetie, I think that other tie -- the one I specifically put with the shirt and jacket in front of you this morning -- makes you look even more devastatingly handsome.

Won't you put it on for me?"

Okay, okay; that's a little over the top. There's enough sugar in that last paragraph to make hummingbirds barf. Suffice it to say she's a lot more gentle than what I deserve, which should be along the lines of, "Holy Coat of Many Colors! Are you freakin' blind or just stupid!"

I'm not saying I can't dress myself, but I probably wore Garanimals (just match the tags) until I was at least 30. In other words, I've done some odd things, sartorially speaking, in my time.

There's a picture of me somewhere, circa age 11, in a fetching combo I put together myself. This groovin' ensemble featured these green and brown hounds tooth checked double-knit britches pulled nearly up to my armpits and tastefully accented with a bright red shirt with blue piping on the sleeves and a blue and white striped pocket. The pants are a little small for me, too – not only are droopy white tube socks clearly visible at least three inches above my ankles, but the pants are so tight one can instantly tell what religion I am.

Over the years I have shown up to the office wearing two different colored penny loafers, mismatched socks, and the ever-present dab of missed shaving cream somewhere on my face. On one memorable occasion, I found myself in a dark blue suit sporting a spectacular hole right in the seat of the pants.

You just haven't lived until your boss walks in as you are trying to sew shut a crater in your britches. Explaining the trench coat you're wearing at your desk is the most fun moment of the experience.

I when I moved to the beach to become an itinerant writer, surf bum, and half-fast guitarist -- all of which are great occupations if you set your living standards low enough -- I switched to wife beaters, ball caps, sandals, and surf baggies.

Eventually, I had got a real job, and by that I mean one that requires shoes, socks, and being someplace on time more often than not. I still came up with some pretty diabolical combinations, but unless you're a TV twink, it isn't that big a deal.

Then one day I got married and suddenly matching clothes mattered, at least to her. She had a point; no one takes a guy seriously when he's wearing plaid on fuchsia, all the while thinking it's gray flannel.

All this leads up to yet another defining moment of sartorial brilliance. It happened about a month ago, just before I moved down here.

I was doing all right that day, or so I thought. Unless you are attending a coronation, life as a reporter, at least in the chitlin' circuit, is generally pretty casual. Most days I wear polo shirts and khakis – items any idiot can put on with a better than even chance of coming up with something that vaguely matches. As I recall, that morning I put on a light blue polo with light chinos, a pair of Sam Browns, and a hip, but understated belt.

Sadly, a family friend had passed away; my wife and I couldn't make the funeral service but decided to get to the visitation afterward -- it would not only be less formal but we could go during my lunch hour. So at noon I picked her up and away we went to pay our respects. We were there nearly an hour, speaking to many friends and family acquaintances, signing the register and offering condolences to members of the grieving family.

It wasn't until I was pulling into our driveway that my Beloved, right in the middle of our conversation, pulled a huge double take. Then she pointed at me and just fell out shrieking with laughter.

"What?" I said. She could do nothing but howl, tears rolling down her face.
"Dang, baby; what? Did I grow a third eye, or something?"

"AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA...your...shhhiirrrrrttttt...snerk...snerk...BAHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

Thinking I had somehow poured pink lemonade on myself, or worse, maybe was sporting a gift from a low flying pigeon, I glanced down.

It suddenly dawned on me that the pony on my shirt didn't look right. Or rather, it did look right. That was the problem. It was over the right side of my chest, facing the wrong way.

I had gone through the entire day, which included at least one interview with a higher-level government official and an hour-long funeral visitation, with my shirt inside out. I was still wearing it that way later that afternoon during a meeting. Strangely enough, no one said anything. But someone, somewhere behind me, was snickering...