



THE UNAMOMMER

By Sarah Pritchett Wittenbraker for Hot Moms Club



I vividly remember my mom driving the three of us to school. All you need to know about me is that I grew up in Dallas in the 80s, so feel free to visualize your own stereotype. Our moms lived by a certain code of being fluffed and decked. Since my mom was as equally cursed as me with an addiction to the snooze button, she couldn't dedicate the time to polishing her "look" by the time we had to pile in the station wagon and start pickup around the neighborhood.

The three of us would sardine in the front bench seat, listening to *The Big Chill* soundtrack. Mom's carpool uniform was a long satin nightie, red-flame-adorned cowboy boots, big sunglasses, bigger earrings, and in grand Texas tradition, a black floor length mink. Although she repeatedly cursed her unruly coiffe, she woke up each morning with not a hair out of place—cemented the night before by enough aerosol spray to endure even the most horrendous and unpredictable weather conditions. (I would be told later in life, that I clearly did not inherit the hair gene.) After dropping us off, she would then return home to devote the necessary hours to the process of getting properly dressed for the day.

These days you don't see modern moms in such desperate disguise. Instead, we embrace our "just don't have time" look. In my head, I know that setting my alarm just 15 minutes before my kids wake up would save me a world of stress and panic, and might allow me the time to throw on a presentable sweater and ballet flats. It's not that I can't get them to school on time. In fact, I'm cripplingly punctual, usually arriving early and having rarely forgotten to sign a form or pack a lunch. They are in the door by the bell, but the delivery is just done with an enormous lack of finesse, grace and style.

No mink in this closet. Instead, my carpool regalia consists of yoga pants pulled up under my short nightie, maybe UGGs (depending on how shameless I'm willing to be), a zip-up hoodie on top, and aviators (if I went that extra mile to put in my contacts). It's a look emulating the Unabomber, rather than a *Dynasty* housewife with a secret.

The new-millennium moms are lucky: our modern day loop hole is exercise clothes. Whether or not we plan to hit the gym after carpool drop-off, we can just look like we have a session with our trainer. Once we put on yoga pants and a sports bra, no one expects to see us in make-up. Our moms didn't have this sort of "out." It was all or nothing for them. Eyeliner, sprayed hair, and an abundance of accessories, complemented ladies-who-lunch outfits. Workout clothes, if owned, were saved for Jane Fonda in the privacy of the home.

My mom still doesn't get it. Every time she sees me in gym clothes, she asks, "Did you work out today?" My usual answer of course being, "No." Her follow up is always, "So you just want to look like you did."



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I guess there's a truth to that. But really, it's just my excuse not to have to look cute. What my yoga pants really say is, "This is why I don't look good today." Immediately, I am absolved of my fashion sin (although my UGGs addiction may never be forgiven).

Even though she lives in another city, I can feel my mom cringe as I herd my children into the car while wearing my Beck souvenir tee and sweats, and the only thing dirtier than my hair is my husband's Pabst Blue Ribbon baseball hat that is resting on a messy pony tail. My kids are matched from bow to toe. It's just me who looks like an escaped lunatic who stole some poor mom's SUV.

I guess the joy that comes out of my morning fashion neglect, is that when my husband and I actually have a hot date, my daughter makes a hilarious face of cartoonish astonishment, and with her mouth wide open and hands over her cheeks tells me how beautiful and fancy I look.

Although once the initial shock has worn off, she always follows up her compliment by asking if I'm going to wear lipstick. I guess no matter the decade or trend, we can never win when it comes to our daughters. Either that or she's been talking to her grandma.