

## **Clothes Makes the Man and the Mason**

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In my youth, I read a short story entitled “*Clothes Make the Man*” by Henri Duvernois.<sup>1</sup> The story is about three robbers who planned to rob a home. They put their muscle man, Tango, in a policeman’s uniform, shiny whistle and all, to patrol the sidewalk to not arouse suspicion. Tango began to change his outlook on the situation, and he began to act as a policeman. He proudly saluted a passing police lieutenant, helped an old lady cross the street, and even decided to take a drunk to jail for disturbing the peace. Tango’s two fellow robbers came running out of the house asking what he was doing, after which one of the robbers struck Tango across his face. Something snapped inside Tango—he remembered the lieutenant answering his salute, the gratitude and admiration of the old lady he helped cross the street—he liked his role as a policeman. His companions looked on in horror as Tango stuffed the shiny whistle into his mouth and blew several salvo blasts on the whistle bringing all the police in Paris. He yelled, “Crooks, robbers! I arrest you in the name of the law.” In the end Tango understood that sometimes “*clothes do make the man*”.

Last year I read an article named “*Clothes Make The Man and the Mason*”, originally published as – A Proper Appreciation.<sup>2</sup> The article observed “Masonry in many respects is the same the world over. The language of symbols, the legend of signs, and the tenets are alike everywhere, so that a man may be recognized as a Mason as well in Africa as England, or in Germany as in America. There is, however, a vast difference in the esteem and appreciation of the fraternity. We may say what we will about the clothes not making the man. One who is careful of his dress on all occasions and will always present the very best appearance he can, possesses a certain element of refinement that is certainly commendable, and that brother who is careful to appear at lodge meetings in appropriate dress shows an appreciation of the place and the people with whom he is to mingle that is praiseworthy.”

Albert Mackey says, “A Freemason in the United States of America is said to be properly clothed when he wears white leather gloves, a white apron, and the jewel of his Masonic rank. The actual dress of a Master Mason is a dark suit, white shirt, tie, and apron.”<sup>3</sup>

“We must constantly remember that in every moment of our life - in public - at work - at pleasure - with our families - even when you are alone - You are a Mason! Before we can expect to attract good men to the fraternity by our conduct and reputation in public, we must learn to conduct ourselves with propriety in the Lodge. Concerning appropriate dress, a dark business suit is often acceptable for a Lodge meeting. But, in some Grand Jurisdictions, formal dress is required even for side-

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Duvernois (born March 4, 1875; died January 30, 1937) was a French writer, screenwriter and playwright

<sup>2</sup> The Canadian Craftsman, March 1898

<sup>3</sup> *Lexicon of Freemasonry*, Albert G. Mackey, Moss and Company, Philadelphia, PA, 1869

liners. The term “respect” encompasses our words, our actions, our appearance and even our thoughts. In many Jurisdictions there is no mandatory dress code, but this does not mean that we should disregard our appearance. As Masons “We regard no man for his worldly wealth ....”, but society everywhere considers that a man’s outward appearance reflects his inner self and attitude. Your manner of dress reflects the respect that you have for the dignity of Masonry, its work, its goals, and its members. At all times your apparel should be appropriate for the occasion and those attending, remembering that the altar of Masonry is the altar of God. Thus, the clothes you would wear for a golf tournament or a degree in an underground mine may not be appropriate for work done in the Lodge quarters.”<sup>4</sup>

Among the topics in *Masonic Etiquette*<sup>5</sup>, by J. Kirk Nicholson, PGM of Georgia, is Officers Dress. “We have become a casual society and in some ways this is good. However, just as familiarity breeds contempt, being too casual can cause disrespect. In most judications there is not a set rule of dress, but there is a practice to wear attire which will show respect and express the dignity of Masonry. We should remember that we represent a Fraternity that is great because of its sacred foundation and there is no place for carelessness...in dress, ritual or dignity.”

In a *New York Times* article entitled, “Mind Games: Sometimes a White Coat Isn’t Just a White Coat,”<sup>6</sup> Adam D. Galinsky, a professor at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, describes “enclothed cognition,” a term used to describe the effect our clothes seem to have on various psychological processes like emotions, self-evaluations, attitudes, and interpersonal interactions. Clothes affect our behavior and our moods because of the symbolic meaning that we, as a society, ascribe to diverse types of attire. Professor Galinsky’s investigation showed a physician who wears a white lab coat knows its symbolic meaning and tends to be more careful, rigorous and good at paying attention.

Behavioral scientists tell us that the “first impression” is a strong cause/effect on the process of sizing you up is on the subconscious and emotional level of the brain. Your evaluation by a stranger takes 30 seconds or less and can be so strong that it could take as much as five years to erase.

In conclusion, clothes sell confidence. In every moment of your life – in public, at work, at pleasure, with our families, even when you are alone – you are a Mason. Your clothing does affect how other people perceive us as well as how we think about ourselves.



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<sup>4</sup> *Standards of Masonic Conduct*, a Short Talk Bulletin (June 1986) has been adapted from a paper of the same title prepared by the Committee on Masonic Research and Education of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Minnesota

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.masonicworld.com/education/articles/MASONIC-ETIQUETTE.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Adam D. Galinsky, *New York Times*, April 2, 2012