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THE GOTH WITH THE MONSTER MOHAWK

BY SHANNON LANE @SHANNONROSELANE ([HTTP://WWW.TWITTER.COM/SHANNONROSELANE](http://www.twitter.com/shannonroselane))

A LONDON-BASED goth has styled their signature mohawk so tall that they struggle to use public transport

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The Goth With The Monster Mohawk | HOOKED ON THE LOOK



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Parma Ham, who is agender and does not like to be known by their birth name, is from London, UK and is known for their striking mohawk hairstyle which can reach heights of up to three feet.

They told Barcroft TV: "I have been told it's a phase my whole life but I have been in this phase now like 14 years."

The 20-something changed their name to Parma Ham on Facebook following a night out in 2013, and after getting blocked on the social media network for using a fake name, it was legally changed to Parma Ham two years later.

They said: "It was a point on the rigidness of a name and how having a birth name is not always the name that you go by, and I was angered by the fact that Facebook had decided that your birth name was who you are and you have to use that, so it did become slightly political in that sense.

"I still had to remind myself that this is light-hearted, it was just me poking fun at names."

Parma, who is sexually fluid, first began experimenting with their identity aged 12.

They said: "I found I was suddenly more aware that I had a body and it suddenly felt quite peer pressured to look a certain way.



MY LIFE AS A LIVING DOLL IS LIBERATING

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I'LL NEVER STOP MODIFYING MY BODY

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"I kind of knew that I was slightly a bit different and I didn't really fit into those roles so well - so things like gender and sexuality I defiantly identified as different.

But 10 years ago I didn't have any language to help me discover who I am, and what I need to do, and that I'm not alone and I think because of that I then started to experiment with how I was perceived.

"I was attracted to goth because it is one of the few things in my environment, my small town, where the men wore make-up, they did their nails, they had long hair, they had skin tight clothes, they were beautiful.

"It was that which was an excuse for me to be excessive and elaborate and really queer but then I didn't have to explain why.

"At the age of 12 and 13 no-one really knows what your gender or sexuality is. I could never really just tell my parents at that age what you are going through because it's just awkward.

"And I didn't really have friends like that, so I definitely had goth as a release to do that, and then from there it kind of just kept going until we ended up like this."

Parma's look is inspired by 70s and 80s goth and music culture, and influenced by stars like Boy George and Marilyn Manson.

They said: "My biggest inspiration is definitely my own subculture which is goth. It's like a point in the early 1980's where it suddenly grew and birthed all kinds of extravagant dark styles."

Parma's impressive mohawk is made up of 70% hair extensions, and uses up to two bottles of hairspray.

Each mohawk takes between one and two hours, depending on the size and shape.

Parma said: "I make mohicans in various sizes, sometimes I stencil on the side of them, sometimes I spray the tips, sometimes I use hair extensions with different colours. I use the hairdryer to fan the hair out in different ways; sometimes I have devil horns, sometimes I just have a big backcombed mess.

"I will say this is roughly 70% hair extensions and it has some of the hair actually tied to the back because I don't want to ruin my hair too much.

"By using hair extensions I usually save my own hair because this level of crimping and back-combing is pretty bad for your hair.

The amount of hard work put into the height of Parma's hair also means they have to prepare their route when they are going out.

Parma explained: "I think every now and again I do wonder why I do what I do, I think it is good to question yourself. I think one of the things that I do question is why I have created such an extreme and difficult look and it is very difficult to maintain.

"It is difficult to travel and there have been instances where I have had to go somewhere international to attend an event but I have a lot of things to be aware of.

"Like even when I DJed in Scotland I had to ask all kinds of insane questions about how I was gonna get to the venue because how do I get transport? Fortunately they have got black cabs in Scotland which I didn't know about so I was able to fit in a car.

"But there were all these certain points where I was like, wow, I really branded myself in such a way that it is very difficult for me to just exist. Like couldn't I have picked something that was a bit easier to get around, a bit more easier to reproduce?"

Parma is a full time gallery producer, and occasionally DJ's at fetish and gay nightclubs in London, however their life now is very different to where they were originally brought up.

Parma told Barcroft: "I'm from Guildford and I absolutely hated that town partly because it reminds me the time where I couldn't really be myself and I couldn't do the things I do.

"I belong in London, I belong in a big city and that's just because everything about my identity is tied up with this city.

"Goth is a sub culture, is a social group so it is kind of impossible to not be around other people; you go to clubs, you go to bands, you swap styling and make-up and hair tips.

"You are heading out together, you drink together, you party together and I think you inspire each other and I love that I can rock up in any city in the world and find a group of people and immediately be welcomed and be a part of it."

Despite the positivity Parma receives from the gothic subculture, they have also experienced not so great feedback via social media.

Parma said: "For whatever reason a video of mine went viral on Facebook and it got like 70 million views. it was reposted during the election in America and there was this kind of right wing page that decided to repost my video and captioned it with something evil like 'left wing and liberals being layabouts', and that is what they decided I am and what I represent.



I'M A GORY LOLITA DOLL

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RECENT



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THE BROTHER AND SISTER WHO AGE TOO FAST

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I WANT KIDS BUT MY HUSBAND IS TWICE MY AGE

(/age-gap-couple-thirty-years-difference-

"From that I received an extremely relentless torrent of abuse targeted at so many different angles of my life, whether it was my sexuality, gender, style, employment, religion.

"It was just all over the place and there was no filter to it and I think what was strange, was the amount of things that people assumed about me based on a 15 second video of me on a sofa.

"I have kept a folder of screenshots of the messages and the abuse that I have received online. I think I did this just to make the people around me aware of the kind of attacks that I was getting, they come at me from all different types of angles and the assumptions they make just the way on how I look and also like the violence that some of them have - like a lot of them wish me dead.

"A lot of them say very disgusting things like, 'If this was my child I would beat them' which really makes me sick because this is a real parent and who knows that their child might actually be queer in some way and they actually are gonna be repressed."

Despite the negativity that the extreme goth has had to face, they view themselves as a platform and outlet for individuals facing issues with their own self-identity.

They said: "I jumped in a taxi two weeks ago and the driver was quite overwhelmed with the way that I looked, which is not unusual, but this one was a lot chattier than most.

"He told me that he had been married a few times and it had not worked out and that he has been kind of repressing himself in so many ways for such a long time. and he saw me like an ultimate beacon of freedom for some reason, that I expressed myself in way that he wished he could have expressed himself.

"I tried to encourage him and said something like, 'You can do it, like I am no different to you whatsoever'. I have kind of removed the barriers of people's judgments which I don't really pay attention to. Unfortunately I think he has been conditioned over such a long period of time and repressed because he was probably around 50 and I think that moment in time was even harder. I think when you start living that life it is kind of difficult to break it.

"I guess, without being too self-aggrandizing, I think I represent freedom, freedom of identity and freedom of self identify and I am kind of proud that I am able to put that across.

"I think recipients of my image kind of get that, and I think some people are inspired by that and some are very grateful just allowed to be."

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