



Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking about fashion law and what-to-wear tips for men, with lawyer and author Douglas Hand. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be.

We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

Welcome to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're excited to welcome Douglas Hand – an attorney, author and podcast host himself. Douglas has authored the book, [The Laws of Style: Sartorial Excellence for the Professional Gentleman](#), which was released in 2018. His [podcast](#) is of the same name. He is one of the preeminent fashion lawyers in the country, and he teaches as an adjunct professor at NYU School of Law and Cardozo School of Law. So Douglas, thanks for joining us on the podcast today. I'm so excited about this episode.

Douglas Hand: Sure thing. Thanks for having me on the show.

Lee Burgess: So, my team is constantly surprised at how popular any of our blog posts on what to wear or fashion are. They are constantly in the top 10 on our website. And so, we have wanted for a while to bring this content to the podcast. Maybe because Alison and I are not men, we also do not have a lot of great content about how men should dress. So I'm also doubly excited that we're adding this content.

Douglas Hand: Happy to oblige.

Lee Burgess: To our audience. So, before we dive into our what-to-wear discussion, can you share a bit more about yourself and how you got interested in fashion law?

Douglas Hand: Oh sure. So, I went to law school and business school here in New York at NYU. New York City being one of the world's fashion capitals, I think that was somewhat influential during that four-year period where I got to sort of run around with folks in the city, gallivant about town. And a lot of the people that I spent time with were in creative industries, and many of them in the fashion industry. I started after graduation at a multinational firm, Shearman & Sterling, as an M&A lawyer, again in New York City, and a short stint in Paris, which I think if anything, just underscored my predilection that fashion was something that was dear to me and a passion of mine. But, also something that being at a large BigLaw firm, it's difficult to steer your practice to focus on a single



industry, let alone a creative one. So, I started my own firm, HBA, with a couple of ex-Shearman lawyers. That's now 15 years ago. God, time flies! But really, to do just that – to focus on the fashion and lifestyle industries. On a much more practical level, fashion is a trillion plus global industry, and I saw a real lack of specialized services being provided to it. So that's a little bit. It's definitely been a gratifying time to build a practice and a firm around a personal passion. And the book, which we'll get into and talk about, but the American Bar Association is my publisher. They approached me after a few years of practice as a #fashionlawyer, thinking, "Wow, this is kind of a new creature. Could you write a book, and what would that book be about?" And *The Laws of Style* is the result.

Lee Burgess: That's great. I think it's always wonderful when lawyers can find an industry or a topic area or something that they are interested in and kind of want to geek out about and be passionate about, and then you can turn it into a successful practice. There's an art to that dance, right?

Douglas Hand: Yes. Yes. Well, and hard work for sure. But when you're working in the name of something you're passionate about, the work doesn't feel as hard.

Lee Burgess: Absolutely. Alright, so let's dive in. We'll talk a bit more about fashion law, but I know that everybody wants to talk about fashion, so let's just dive in. So I guess the place to start is this idea that anyone in law school or anyone who's thinking about going to law school knows that every lawyer needs a good suit. And we were talking about, getting ready for this podcast, that my father was a prosecutor so when I grew up, Dad was in a suit every day. His whole closet was stuffed with them. And so, what do you think makes a good suit for interviewing and being a young lawyer? How do you know if you've got the right presentation for yourself?

Douglas Hand: Yeah. Well, it's an excellent question, also excellent observation that the suit is, for the male lawyer and the female lawyer, really one of the uniforms. A well-cut suit is definitely a wardrobe essential. Moreover, the suit is really, and maybe I'm speaking to the men here, the easiest way to get acceptably dressed in a coordinated way, a la kind of Garanimals. You've got 85% of your sartorial presentation already covered with the jacket and the trousers, even if you're not paying attention. But I think for young lawyers, budget and versatility are really key. There are so many different styles of suit, and trust me, not all of them are acceptable as business attire. So starting with the basics, and in *The Laws of Style*, I lay out four fundamental suits that should be the first four purchased by any young lawyer. Which is not to say you've got to go out and buy four suits. You can do this one at a time. But I think in terms of investment, these are all very solid investments.



One would be a navy blue pinstripe suit. Two would be a gray flannel suit. Three would be a charcoal pinstripe suit. And four would be a navy blue suit, no pinstripes. Now, I know that sounds a bit dull and not much of a color palette, but these are frameworks. These are each subtle, professional, and they're almost unrecognizable. And into them you can weave through your choice of shirt, tie, shoes, other accessories. So many different ensembles that you can wear two, even three times a week, meaning the same suit. But you can weave it into so many different outfits. So I think there's a great sort of budgetary pop that you get out of getting these basics, before getting something like a white linen suit or an olive double-breasted suit; which you may wear it, but if you wear it more than once every two weeks, you're going to be the guy in the linen suit.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And the thing that you mentioned, whether or not it's the same for women – I actually think it is somewhat the same, especially if you're going to be in court or you're working in an office. I know my government lawyer friends always felt a lot of pressure around this, because even if they didn't go to court, you still had to basically wear a suit to the office. Those staples. And that they all fit. And that they're all of a good quality, so they don't wrinkle and you don't look disheveled. And then it is pretty easy to get dressed, because you're like, "Well, which of my core options am I going to grab, and then how am I going to accessorize it so it doesn't look exactly the same?"

Douglas Hand: Yeah. Now also, depending upon where one is practicing, but certainly acknowledging that lawyers travel, fabrication is very, very important. If you get that blue pinstripe suit in a very, very heavy wool, it's not going to be wearable during the spring/summer months. And so, in terms of weight – and this maybe gets a little bit specific, but usually wool ranges in seven ounces up to 19 ounces, which would be like some Scottish Highlander out there in the 18th century version of athleisure. Nobody wears that. But 11 to 12 ounces is common and versatile and really all four seasons.

Lee Burgess: Which is good.

Douglas Hand: Again, spending on one suit you're going to want to have that kind of balance.

Lee Burgess: I think that's great, that you have so much specificity. So with someone who's just maybe starting to do the interview process... So let's say you're going through on campus interviewing and maybe you can't quite spring for the four suits, what do you think are the first two to start with for the interview process?

Douglas Hand: I think in a way they were laid out in order of priority. I'd say the navy blue pinstripe is your number one first suit, and then gray flannel. But to a degree that depends on your own coloring. Some men feel more comfortable in a light gray flannel. Maybe their skin tone is darker, if they've got darker hair. Someone



ruddier with lighter skin tone may prefer the blue. But these four colors, these four configurations work for every single man on the planet.

- Lee Burgess: That's pretty cool. That's easy; always good to have a checklist. Then you can just go shopping with your checklist. Makes it very direct.
- Douglas Hand: That's right. Make sure it fits, of course. And make sure that you take it to a tailor, but that's a different conversation.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. So let's jump into what this is going to cost, because I think a lot of folks, especially in law school and who are young lawyers, that's one of their bigger concerns. I can definitely sense that you lean towards buy less, have it be higher quality. Am I reading that right?
- Douglas Hand: Yeah, I mean just in the sense of, it's an investment, particularly in these pieces. The higher quality you get, the longer they will last, because as you advance in your career and you go from junior to mid-level, maybe you can afford now a suit that's in a higher price point. But if you really spent when you first bought, you don't necessarily need to replace. The last thing you want to do is make partner finally at a firm and have bought four different blue pinstripe suits, because then you are the guy who's wearing a blue pinstripe suit every day of the week.
- Lee Burgess: So, how do you go about shopping and find that magic option that is not super luxury but not necessarily going to make you look maybe distractingly unprofessional? I know in your book I think you even list out brands to check out. Are they luxury brands? Are they more affordable brands? How do you approach this idea of shopping?
- Douglas Hand: Right. So I try to cover all price points. I list out hundreds of brands in the book. It's not formal blue booking, but there are quite a bit of footnotes in the book. The ABA was familiar with that as the publisher. But as far as price points, I really view a budget suit as something that a young lawyer should be able to spend somewhere from \$300 to \$600 on, as that first interview suit. And there are really good options within that range. There's [Suitsupply](#), a Dutch company that makes a very good value proposition direct-to-consumer suit. There's another brand, [Frank And Oak](#). Their suits are all under \$400. [Nick Graham](#) is a US designer; his suits typically are under \$300. Again, I'm a bit of an old dog at this point. They don't populate my closet, but I think just starting out, those are good solutions. Also, candidly, it's not unwise and it's certainly environmentally sustainable to think about purchasing secondhand suits. There are websites like [threadUP](#) or even [Goodwill's eComm site](#). I'm working with a group that's looking to potentially rebrand that under William Good for menswear to offer a real value proposition, which is also not adding to landfills with suits that have been cast off and not purchased.



- Lee Burgess: I think that especially with these classic pieces... I guess there are some suits that are on-trend, but there are an awful lot of suits that don't shift every couple of years with what's on-trend in this list that you're talking about. So I think that really is a good option, and I hadn't thought about threadUP and these online secondhand options. Especially, I could see a student who knows that on-campus interviewing is coming up in the future – you could start early, because you might have to hunt a little bit more to find what you need on some of these sites.
- Douglas Hand: Indeed. And you may have to spend a little bit more on the tailoring, which is important. You're not going to be able to try it on. But that is a great option. Just back to fathers who do inform their sons in terms of how to dress – my father wore a suit most days as well. But when he was starting his career out, he bought suits at Salvation Army and at Goodwill and did a little tailoring himself, which I found pretty fascinating.
- Lee Burgess: Interesting. I think most men in my life I know don't know how to tailor. I remember in college sewing buttons on my friend's pants or whatever, because he had no idea. Or he had holes in his pockets.
- Douglas Hand: Yeah, that's as much as I can do. I can sew a button. So yeah, that didn't pass on to me. The love of tailored clothing did, but not the ability to actually do the tailoring. But in New York City I've got an abundance of riches in terms of people that can help me with that.
- Lee Burgess: That's true. I think in urban areas, finding a tailor is definitely a lot easier. I know there's one around the corner from my house. There are definitely those that are better than others. But especially I think in urban communities it's not as hard to find folks who are still doing that.
- Douglas Hand: Absolutely. And really, listeners should know it's an important relationship. If you are going to be wearing suits for your career, that relationship is one that you want to nurture. You want to go to the same tailor when you find one that you like. You want to remember their birthday. You want to send them a little card for the holidays, and some extra money in it if you can afford it, because it's an important and intimate relationship.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's true. You are wearing their work every day. One of the things that has been all the rage, it seems, especially in this discussion of sustainability, is this idea of the capsule wardrobe. I know that I've read a lot about it, and I've read blog posts about it and listened to podcasts about it. But for the professional person I think this idea of the capsule wardrobe – which seems to be maybe your idea of these four suits – makes a lot of sense. So do you think that looking at your professional wardrobe as these individual pieces that can be



rematched and repurposed with each other is kind of your ideal that you're going for?

Douglas Hand: Yeah, absolutely. The Fundamental Four Suits is just one list in the book. You'll obviously appreciate my love of consonants, but I've got a Foundational Five list of shoes, which are sort of important shoes that will serve you very, very well, and assuming your feet don't grow, you can wear them for your entire career. As well as certain knits and certain ties that are just never going to go out of style, and so investing in them makes sense. And then, if you have throwaway cash or you're on a trip somewhere and you see something that you feel like, "Oh God, I could integrate that into my wardrobe once or twice a year, but I really want to" – by all means, go and do it. You've got the perfect framework from which to do that. So, a linen scarf or a pocket square that you see in Barcelona or whatever it is – these little things, these little elements of yourself, I think are very, very important to integrate into the framework. Lest you start to look like a robot who's wearing a blue pinstripe suit, and then a gray flannel suit in a very, very staid prosaic configuration.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. One of the things you mentioned is you try and kind of make the suit have a little more of your own personality so you feel like yourself. I think this gets a little bit trickier as the office cultures are getting a little more casual, because there's a little more flexibility and there are more judgment calls about what's appropriate. I live on the West Coast and when I first entered my BigLaw firm, we would do videoconference calls with offices around the country. Everyone in the New York office was in a suit, and everyone in the San Francisco office was in sweaters and button ups. And they were kind of glaring at us through the computer. You could see that they were like, "Looking good there, San Francisco. Yeah, working hard, I see." But I think that in a way the casual nature of some office environments gets a little more tricky, because what you consider your casual wardrobe for your life doesn't necessarily translate to casual for the office.

Douglas Hand: Yeah. Look, business casual to me is both a wonderful opportunity for self-expression, but it's also a minefield. The suit is so much easier. The suit is like Garanimals for adults, if anybody remembers that. I mean, 85% of your look is already coordinated. So, straying from the suit is best done really by staying within some of the guidelines that the suit provides. By that I mean pairing trousers with an odd jacket. And by "odd" I don't mean one with polka dots on it. It's one that doesn't pair with the trousers. And tie or no tie. Or substituting the cardigan sweater for the jacket, again with trousers. One of my peeves – and I think this is done with the best of intentions by a lot of men – but a lot of guys on Casual Friday will wear a suit, a dress shirt, dress shoes, the belt, and they just won't wear the tie. And to me that's just such a choice of defeat. It's like the tie is the only thing that communicates a level of formality.



But anyway, back to doing business casual. Difficulty really abounds when you're pairing not only two colors, but two different textures, which are as important as colors in terms of how the eye reads them, how the viewer sort of looks at it. And it gets even harder when you've got plaids or prints that are involved. So, while it's far from impossible, it's a high bar. When executed well, it can really cast you in sartorial glory, because those that know recognize that, "Wow, that person's really putting it together well." I think one key thing for young lawyers to avoid is reading into "casual" athleisure or athletic wear. In my mind, unless there's an actual sporting activity going on, just avoid the sweats, avoid the sneakers.

Lee Burgess:

One thing I did, and granted, it gets more and more years ago, but when I had my first summer associate job... I had been a consultant before law school, so I had already kind of had a professional persona, but my wardrobe had run out of gas, because I kind of stopped buying new stuff when I knew I was going back to school. So I just went to Nordstrom on a weekday and I found a nice salesperson and I basically was like, "I have this job at a big firm. This is kind of my budget. And I need help. I need you to help me put together." And what I would say is she put together, she pulled this kind of camo colored jacket that was paired with these different shells and she got me a few different types of slacks and a skirt. And within my budget, she was able to kind of pull together, based on what I told her about the office environment, what I thought was a pretty incredible concoction of stuff that I would not... And I love clothes, but that I don't think that I would have pulled together. If you're someone who's feeling lost, if you're a guy who literally is like, "I hate to shop. I don't know what to do" – is that an option for you? Do you think that they should go to a store and just ask for help?

Douglas Hand:

Yeah. Look, I think a lot of men in the same way they don't want to ask for directions, in the same way they don't want to tell a mechanic they don't how their car works, don't like going into a store and sort of availing themselves of help. It's an admission of some lack of knowledge or lack of style that a lot of men have an issue with. So I think they should. The answer is they should. And the real question there is, what store? Because a lot of them, the retail associates maybe have slightly skewed incentives. When presenting them with a budget, they want to upsell you because they're based on a commission. But again, if it can be a long-term relationship, then it does make sense.

What I think a lot of men are gravitating to today, because they don't actually have to have the face-to-face are box service subscription models. There's [Stitch Fix for Men](#). I think [GQ](#) is now doing a quarterly subscription box. And so you're getting a stylist, but it's not a stylist who is literally in your face. It's someone who's a bot, maybe. And that's your level of interaction with them. And I think for a lot of men, that's a more comfortable way to get some of the help that they need, or at least the basic help. I think once men kind of start down the



path of recognizing what they look good in, what basics are, what fit is important, they can start to make their own choices. I look at my early days, and some of the things I wore were just so... I cringe.

Lee Burgess: Oh, we all cringe. We all had those moments.

Douglas Hand: I started my practice in the '90s, so you can imagine what was going on. In any event, I think box services are a good solution. But absolutely, the help of a professional is important. Or buy the book. *The Laws of Style* hopefully will add a little bit of knowledge from which men can start to make some of their own choices.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I have used Stitch Fix myself. One of the things I think that is nice about some of those box services is you can really contain the budget idea. I haven't used Stitch Fix in a while, but the last time I did it, it let you basically top out the level that you wanted to spend. And so, in a way, you're not getting that same upsell that you might be getting at a certain department store.

Douglas Hand: Right. Exactly.

Lee Burgess: So, one of the things I read in your bio that I thought was interesting and I think you mention even in the book, is that you mentioned working in Paris and I think you have a lot of international clients and have had international clients over the years. I think the world is getting smaller and we're interacting with clients around the country, around the world, in places like the Middle East, where cultural norms around dress are a little bit different, more conservative in some areas than many places in the States. So, what do you recommend to someone who's trying to figure out how they should dress for a client that is maybe from a different location or a different culture to be respectful, but also still have this professional persona that they're used to?

Douglas Hand: It's very important to recognize cultural differences, particularly in the area of formality where I find the rest of the world is typically more formal than the U.S. One of the key laws of style in the book is dressing more formally than your clients. Always. The client's level of formality and dress is but a floor. The lawyer only goes above it. That can mean different things for different lawyers. If you're a startup lawyer in your neck of the woods, maybe your clients are all in flip flops and cargo pants. And so when you show up in chinos and a sweater, you are more formal. Your bar was quite a bit lower. But if you're representing a French investment bank and you walk into a conference room as their lawyer and you are not completely put together in at least a suit, if not a three-piece suit that's impeccable, and showing that respect for the job that you are doing for them, you're making a massive, massive misstep. There is an expectation amongst all clients that their lawyer is serious and pays attention to details, and this rarely get communicated well through casual apparel. Certainly your own



lawyering or your innate intelligence can overcome a bad first impression, but why would you ever start with one hand tied behind your back? A first impression is formed within 30 seconds of someone meeting you. That's not enough time to wow them with your knowledge of the '34 Act or the latest case on data privacy, but it is enough time for them to notice what you're wearing and how well you're put together.

Lee Burgess: And I think what's interesting is we can often get caught up I think in this social media world where a lot of people feel there's such focus on just appearance. This isn't about if you are the thinnest or the tallest. I hear what you're talking about. It's really about presenting yourself in a put-together way. It's not saying that you have to have your hair cut exactly a certain way or that you have to be a certain size or a certain body type. It's more about how to present yourself so that you come off as this professional persona. It's almost like a costume. I used to do theater. And when I first would put on the suit and go do stuff, I'm like, "Oh, it's like I'm dressing up to play a part." But in a lot of ways you are, because you're dressing up to play a role that somebody is paying you a lot of money for.

Douglas Hand: Absolutely. And listen, clients rarely think that you're not expensive. We charge, some of us, very, very high hourly rates for what we do. And so, there is a sense that we should be dressed appropriately for doing it. I talk about a couple of studies in the book on smart dressing equals smart performance. Basically enclothed cognition. It actually scientifically has been shown that when you are dressed more formally, not only are the reactions that you get, basically elevating you in terms of... Some of the studies are based on negotiations, and those that are dressed less formally would always "lose" on relative terms in the negotiation to those that are dressed more formally.

Lee Burgess: Interesting.

Douglas Hand: Also, just the own self-awareness when someone is dressed more formally. They feel a little bit more powerful, and that actually results in more abstract thought relative to just concrete thought. Abstract thought being the less linear, the more thoughtful, the more cerebral, just the "smarter" way of thinking is a bit outside the box. And they have actually shown through a number of studies that I cite in the book that this happens when you are dressed in traditional white collar work wear.

Lee Burgess: One of my favorite mentors of all time, she's not a lawyer, but she was one of my mentors in college, and she teaches and does a lot of research around leadership. So I was in college in the late '90s, early 2000s, and I remember getting dressed up to go to a thing. I was a Psych major, we were giving a presentation at a psychology conference for some research we'd done. I think I said to her, "So, what are we wearing? Am I wearing a sweater?" And she was like, "What do you think the men in the room are wearing?" And I was like, "I



don't know." Her rule of thumb was, if a man's going to be in a jacket, you need to be in a jacket. And I was like, "Okay." It's interesting too, because I've taken that rule and to this day, it still works. Now I'm a little bit older and I have my own profession that's a little bit different. But if I'm going to an event and I think men are going to be in suits, I typically have a jacket on.

But I also think the other thing to think about in some of these professional environments is, what is your boss going to be wearing? I think it's not even just the client. I would see in the firms, when I would be in the firms that sometimes... I was in my late 20s, so I had worked for a while, but the younger new associates, sometimes I think they didn't dress up to the people that they were in meetings with. And then I think when they scan the room, it's like they scan and they see you're the less experienced person. And so, I think you have to kind of ask yourself. Maybe you don't want to wear a jacket, but if every other more senior lawyer is going to be in the room, then you better be in a jacket too.

Douglas Hand: Yeah. There are also certain protocols at certain BigLaw – I'll call them white shoe firms, that you don't dress like a partner before you're a partner as well. So it's tough to navigate, because the contrast collar French cuff shirt is an extremely formal garment. But you wear that as a first-year associate and at least the days that I was starting out, you were too much of a striver there. You're dressing like you've got the "partner" on your business card before you do.

Lee Burgess: That's fascinating.

Douglas Hand: So, it was kind of interesting to navigate dressing formally, but also dressing within some notion of rank within the firm, which, sorry to say it – some of those things that the partners maintain for themselves as these indicators of power. I'm not pointing any fingers. None of this was explicitly stated; it was more cultural. But they were the more flourishing type, peacocking maybe elements of menswear that if you appreciated menswear you wanted to wear. But you kind of had to wait until you'd earned your stripes, so to speak.

Lee Burgess: That's interesting.

Douglas Hand: Yeah. So it's tough.

Lee Burgess: I think that's an East Coast thing more than a West Coast thing.

Douglas Hand: Could be. In fact, in the West Coast, it might be the ability to dress more casually.

Lee Burgess: Ah, that's interesting.



- Douglas Hand: It communicates having achieved seniority, that you can show up and wear the TOMS espadrilles into the team meeting one week. And if you tried that as a junior, you'd be in trouble. Career-wise, that is.
- Lee Burgess: Then I think on the West Coast you also have a lot of lawyers who are always kind of dancing in the gray area. Every lawyer that I know who practices in the West Coast has a suit hanging in their office, just in case. And then my father, when he was in private practice, he was like a talking head on local television for legal analysis stuff. So he always had a suit in his car, because he would be out doing something and would get this phone call that this thing has happened, and he didn't always have time to go home. So he had the trunk suit.
- Douglas Hand: And there needs to be sort of an urban dictionary for all of these suits that are left in random locations by people to jump into, because they are prevalent. What I would say, and again, this may be more of a living in New York City, in any major urban capital, where I honestly never know who I'm going to bump into that day. And so, even if it's a day where I look at my calendar and I don't have anything that "requires" a suit, I'm still going to wear a suit, just because I'm not uncomfortable in it, and chances are something may happen where I'll have wanted to be in the suit. Or just dressing appropriately. So, what I would say to people who are inclined to have their suit hanging from the office hanger or in the back of the car is, "You're not buying the right suit. Buy a suit that you're comfortable enough in."
- Lee Burgess: That's a good point, which goes back to the tailoring. Find a suit and make sure it fits so you're comfortable in it. We could go on and on about this, but before we run out of time, I wanted to talk a little bit more about your practice area, because fashion law is something I know NYU has a program. I think Fordham also has a program in New York around fashion law, and then you've taught classes at Cardozo. So this is an area that we hear that students are interested in. So when you're repping clients in the fashion world, what is the type of work that you're doing for these clients? What does it mean to work in fashion law?
- Douglas Hand: Yeah. I teach a Fashion Law course both at NYU and then a Fashion Law practicum at Cardozo. They're similar classes. My firm's practice really involves several areas of law applied to a single industry. The industry itself is somewhat broadly considered. Fashion really covers apparel, footwear, accessories, even perfume and cosmetics. But my firm has a traditional, robust IP department, which is what most people associate with fashion law, because those are the cases that actually have been ruled on in the trademark and design protection realms. Those issues come up all the time as well as licensing that our IP department handles. But we also have commercial litigators who handle all sorts of claims that hit fashion brands and are particular to fashion brands. We have retail lease specialists who, in a more traditional BigLaw setting, would be considered real estate lawyers. But all they do is retail leases, and a lot of



brands do a tremendous amount of retail lease work. Then we have a main engine or corporate commercial transactional lawyers like myself, who handle everything from M&A and corporate finance to small contracts that occur for these brands during Fashion Weeks for influencers, photographers, and models. It's one of those distinctions where when you say it in a classroom, there's no black letter law of fashion law. It really is several areas of law, several bodies of law, just applied to the industry. But the industry itself has enough peculiarity around it or sort of atypical nature that it does make sense to have this focus.

Not to sort of geek out on industry, but indulge me. Traditional fashion brand really is just a design and marketing company that sits between the doors that its products sell through, which are wholesale accounts – think Macy's to Saks Fifth Avenue; as well as the factories. They don't own the factories, they don't own the means of their production, they don't own the raw material production. And so, really what they do is design a line and send it to someone to get it made, and market that line and try to get the people that buy it, buy it, so that the ultimate customer will see it in their store and buy it. That model has shifted and is shifting as wholesale accounts are becoming dinosaurs and moving too late. But that's the traditional industry. So, sitting in between these two inputs and outputs means a ton of contracts. And a ton of contracts means a lot of legal work. So, there it is.

Lee Burgess: And it's a changing industry too. You have disrupters – Rent the Runway, we talked about threadUP, these box subscription services. So, it's got to be also an interesting area, where you now have a lot of stuff happening on the Internet. You have totally new models of sales and rentals of clothing and things like that, that I don't think really existed before.

Douglas Hand: Exactly. As well as marketing. The rise of the influencer and influencer marketing. No one really spends \$200,000 to put an ad in Vogue. I mean, I shouldn't say "nobody". People still do, but it's more from just muscle memory that those marketing departments of luxury brands do that. The smarter dollars these days are going to very, very curated influencers and micro influencers who have small audiences of dedicated... They're called "tribal followers". And if they like something, whether that's organic or not, it can move the needle on sales. So it's an interesting way to engage with the customer. And sustainability is really the other element. In today's [WWD](#) there's a full report on the growth of secondhand sales of reused items, which is very, very interesting. That market is expected to grow between now and next year up to \$50 billion, which is a staggering number.

Lee Burgess: What? That's a staggering number! That's incredible. It sounds like an area of the law that if you like the subject matter, if you like these companies and what they're doing, or even some of these disrupters, that there are a lot of different entry points that you can get into. And it sounds like if you're thinking about



going to law school, looking for a law school that would have some of these classes that you're teaching. I know there aren't a ton of them. The ones I know about are in New York and LA.

Douglas Hand: I think Penn has one as well.

Lee Burgess: I think Loyola in Los Angeles has one.

Douglas Hand: Correct.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. But if you want to work in fashion or fashion and marketing, things like that, New York and LA are usually where you end up.

Douglas Hand: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: Awesome. I feel like we could prattle on for a long time, but we probably have to come for a close. But I hope next time I'm in New York, maybe I can convince you to give me an excuse to get dressed up, and we can go have a drink and talk more about fashion.

Douglas Hand: That's it. And I can guide your husband on what trousers he should be wearing while at work.

Lee Burgess: Perfect. Love it. I love it. Alright, with that, we're unfortunately out of time. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. We will link to Douglas' book and podcast in the show notes, if you would like to check that out. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](https://www.lawschooltoolbox.com/contact-form) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

RESOURCES:

[The Laws of Style: Sartorial Excellence for the Professional Gentleman, by Douglas Hand](#)

[Douglas Hand at Hand Baldachin & Associates LLP](#)

[handofthelaw \(Douglas Hand's Instagram account\)](#)

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