

Bookstore thieves hard to defend

By CAROLYN BEAVER
Of the Emerald

For some students, an outrageous \$75 bill (what, for only five books?) at the bookstore may be enough temptation to do a little five-finger discounting.

But Braulio Escobar, with the Student Defender's Division of the Office of Student Advocacy, warns potential shoplifters against it.

"They do an ideal bust" at the University Bookstore, says Escobar. After suspected shoplifters are stopped, "they take them to the back office, read their rights and have them sign a card saying they've been read their rights. It's difficult to attack a bookstore arrest," he says.

"We arrest people for shoplifting if we feel they did intend to take something from the store" without paying for it, says James Williams, bookstore general manager.

"It's a matter of observation," Williams says. "Once they leave the store, we contact them and interrogate them to find out what's happened."

Escobar says "unfortunately, with most cases we handle... students have made a statement to the bookstore"



Drawing by Jim Payne

admitting some degree of guilt. It's the "if I talk a lot they'll go easy on me" syndrome, he says.

The bookstore, however, treats each shoplifting case the same. If bookstore personnel feel a person intended to steal something, charges are pressed and the person is taken to court.

Judges sentences may vary,

but if a person pleads guilty, a sentence is passed with fines up to about \$200 and several days in jail. Last year a student spent four days in jail after being caught with a 50-cent ruler he didn't pay for.

If a not-guilty plea is entered, the judge assesses an automatic \$175 bail fee and sets a trial date. Escobar says sometimes the judge will lower the bail

charge, but he hasn't been "entirely successful" in obtaining the reduced fee.

"It used to be that with the permission of the prosecutor, you could forfeit the bail" in lieu of paying the fine and spending time in jail, says Escobar. "It wasn't a guilty plea or a conviction in legal terms, but it guaranteed no jail time," he

The practice was recently

dropped "because it's discriminatory against those who can't come up with the money," Escobar says.

Some community stores will "compromise civilly in terms of a fee," Escobar says. Instead of paying the court the bail or court fee, stores will accept the same amount of money and "use it to finance their security system. It guarantees no jail time and no criminal record" even though it's "legalized highway robbery," he says.

Other stores will allow shoplifters to pay for their deed through a work program. Escobar says it "bothers me from a defense situation that the bookstore won't look at the circumstances of student. They treat them all the same. I guess I can see where they'd want an even-handed policy, though."

Williams says they "attempt to be consistent and fair" with the approximately 100 to 125 shoplifters caught yearly. His objective is "to protect the property of our membership and the honest shoppers. We're not trying to create a hostile environment, but we'd like to see people be aware that they run the risk of being caught" and that the consequences of being caught are not pleasant.

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Colleges charged royalty fees

WASHINGTON (AP) — College students, already facing ever increasing education costs, will soon have to pay roughly 13 cents each in royalty fees for much of the music they hear.

A new law requires colleges and universities to pay royalties for copyrighted music aired on campus at concerts, the college radio stations, piped-in over

loudspeakers and possibly even bands' halftime shows at football games.

In the past, the colleges were exempt from paying royalty fees to composers' licensing organizations on grounds that the music was "not for profit." But a sweeping revision of the copyright laws has wiped out that exemption.

Several higher education groups have just reached model agreements with the major performing rights organizations, which are sending licensing contracts to the nation's 3,000 colleges. Although the law took effect Jan. 1, the groups are observing a moratorium on royalty fees for now.

The changes in the copyright provisions were part of a congressional overhaul of U.S. copyright laws in 1976. It was the first time the laws were revised since 1909.

The two major licensing organizations, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers and Broadcast Music Inc., are each charging 5 to 6 percent per student plus \$50 to \$60 per school. In addition, they are levying fees ranging from \$15 to \$330 per concert where the performer is paid \$1,000 or more.

A third, smaller group, the Society of European Stage, Authors and Composers, is charging a flat fee that ranges from \$50 to \$440 per college and is equivalent to about 2 cents per student.

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