

stranger

THAN FICTION

Levi's campaign puts vandals in khakis

NEW YORK (AP) — The ad campaign for Levi's new line of khakis seems aimed at the crowbar-and-brick crowd.

Levi Strauss & Co. began putting actual pairs of the \$50 pants in its bus shelter ads in New York City and San Francisco this week, and it fully expects people will break through the plastic panels to steal them.

In fact, the company is so sure people will stoop to vandalism to get at the pants that it designed the ads for pre- and post-theft presentation.

If the khakis are still there, the ad copy reads, "Nice Pants." Once the pants disappear, an outline of the khakis remains with the words, "Apparently they were very nice pants."

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was not amused, condemning the ads as "a terrible mistake ... exactly the wrong message to be teaching to people."

But the mayor was sending just the message Levi's wanted: free publicity.

"The thought did cross our mind that some pairs might be stolen," acknowledged Brad Williams, senior marketing specialist with the San Francisco-based company. "But we think that adds to the talk value of the ads."

The pants appeared this week in New York City and San Francisco, in between the same hard plastic panels used for conventional two-dimensional advertisements. In all, 40 New York bus shelters had a pair of Dockers.

By Tuesday morning, at least one pair of pants was already gone from the West Coast, and the *New York Post* said several pairs were missing here.

"We factored the vandalism into their contract," said Doug Watts, a vice president at Gannett Outdoor Advertising, which rented the ad space in New York. Gannett charged Levi's an extra fee, anticipating the replacement of shattered plastic (\$300 a sheet) and twisted panel boxes (\$2,000 apiece).

The ads will run through the end of October, pants or no pants. But a warning to would-be thieves: The sample khakis are mostly waist sizes 32 or 34.

"Anybody bigger will be disappointed when they try them on," Williams said.

Speaking of pants... don't wear them in this judge's court

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — A judge refused to let a female lawyer enter a plea for her client because she was wearing pants.

"If a man were to come to court without a tie, I'd ask him to put on a tie," Circuit Judge Joseph Wilson said after calling off Monday's hearing.

Heather Smith's client, who faces firearms charges, will have to enter her plea at a later date.

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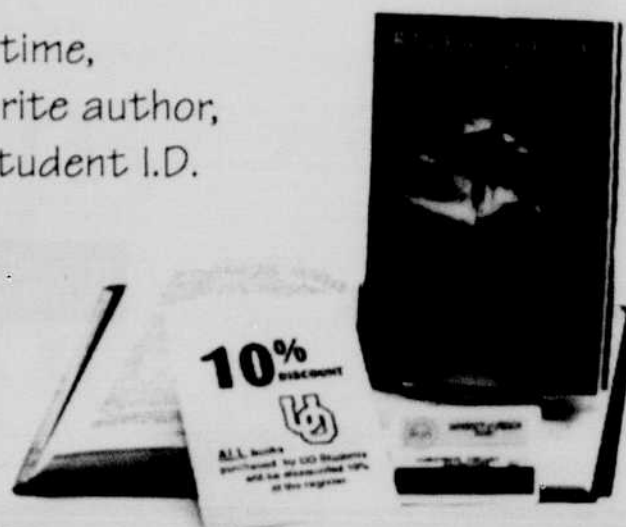
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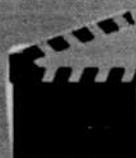


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