

Start Transaction	61301	1	<1>
IT B&M CIGAR	0.89	1	<1>
AM AMT TENDERED	0.95	1	<1>
TT Amount Due:\$	0.95	1	<1>
CH Change \$	0.00	1	<1>



Shopping While Black?

FOUR LIBERIAN WOMEN ACCUSED OF SHOPLIFTING AT GUESS? SAY THEY WERE TARGETED BECAUSE OF THEIR SKIN COLOR

BY JONATHAN KAMINSKY

Upon arriving at the sprawling Albertville outlet mall on a balmy morning in April, Albertha Thomas had two objectives, she says. Accompanied by her two sisters and her cousin, she was looking for presents to bring along on a visit to her native Liberia, which she'd fled during its brutal civil war. And flush from her latest paycheck as a nurse's assistant, Thomas says, she wasn't opposed to spoiling herself a little, too.

After scoring shoes at Nike and buying a stack of shirts at the Gap, Thomas and her fellow dark-skinned shopping companions, all in their late 20s and early 30s, were hired by a promising sale at Guess?. They picked out T-shirts, passing them around to see who they looked best on, and were waiting to try on some capri pants in the fitting rooms when the foursome was met by Sara Manion, the chic and slender blond-haired manager of the store.

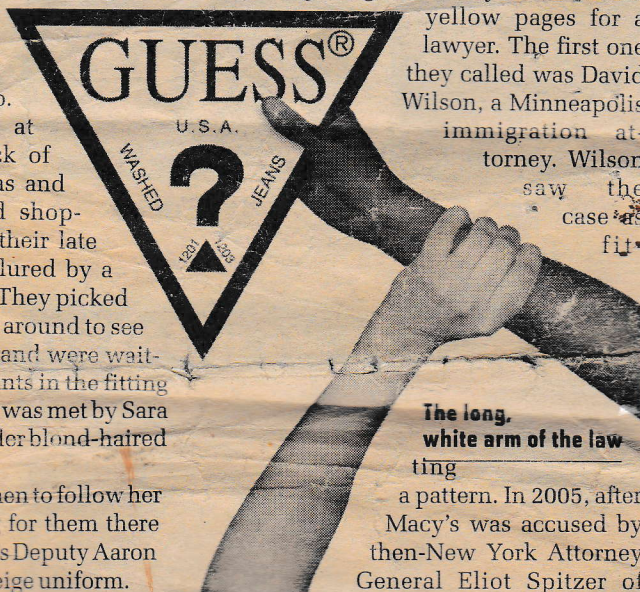
Manion asked the women to follow her to the back room. Waiting for them there was Wright County Sheriff's Deputy Aaron Myren, a husky man in a beige uniform.

Manion and her employees, having endured a spate of recent shoplifting, were

for our money."

The deputy asked Thomas to put her money away and told the women they were free to go, according to his report. But they didn't leave without telling Manion that they felt certain they'd been racially profiled, and this wouldn't be the end of it.

After getting home, they consulted the yellow pages for a lawyer. The first one they called was David Wilson, a Minneapolis immigration attorney. Wilson saw the case as fit



The long, white arm of the law

ting a pattern. In 2005, after Macy's was accused by then-New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer of racial profiling, it agreed to overhaul security at its stores and offered

