

Black customer sues Kmart

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ERIE, Pa. — A black woman who tried to return a coat at Kmart said the store manager made monkey noises at her and refused to give her a refund.

Cheryl Pire, 37, of Harborcreek Township in suburban Erie, filed a lawsuit last month in federal court against Kmart Corp. and Kenneth Barnes, who manages the store in Summit Township.

She is seeking unspecified damages.

"I have never in my life felt the way that I felt that day," Pire said. "I felt like I was denied a refund because of the color of my skin. He mocked me, he pulled his ears out and made some kind of a monkey noise. I felt like I was discriminated against."

Barnes, who is white, denied Pire's allegations.

"It's totally not true. It's totally

beyond comprehension. It's absolutely, 100 percent false," said Barnes, 47, who has been with Kmart for 26 years, including 10 as a manager.

Mary Lorencz, a spokeswoman for Kmart headquarters in Troy, Mich., said the discount retailer has not investigated Pire's complaint.

"I can't imagine anyone would do that," she said. "We certainly have no policies that would be put into effect based on a person's race. Our refund policy is the same regardless of who's returning the merchandise."

Pire's lawyer, Paul Susko, said his client's husband, who is white, witnessed the alleged incident.

"The manager didn't know they were connected," Susko said.

Several customers also witnessed the incident, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit claims Pire and her

husband went to the store Nov. 24, 1995, to return their son's coat because its snaps had fallen off.

She said she did not have a receipt for the coat and did not have a driver's license. She offered her military identification card, but it was refused.

"No receipt, no driver's license, no refund," the suit claims Barnes told Pire.

Barnes then allegedly told Pire, "You get nothing," before making the monkey noises.

The lawsuit said other Kmart supervisors and managers told Pire the store honors military identification cards for refunds of returned merchandise without a receipt.

Lorencz said Kmart changed its return policy in August. When customers return merchandise without a receipt, they are offered store credit instead of cash, she said.

CFA promotes African trade

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

The Constituency for Africa is making an urgent appeal to African American organizations and leadership to support the Africa Trade Legislation (H.R. 1432), sponsored by Reps. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), Phil Crane (R-Ill.) and Jim McDermott (D-Wash.).

When Congress went into recess in late November the Africa trade bill was tabled without full debate. The Republican leadership attempted to trade passage of the Africa trade bill for the support of the Congressional Black Caucus on fast-track legislation, say CFA supports.

The group suggests that it is possible that in an upcoming election year the bill may never resurface for a vote, despite the relatively strong bipartisan support it enjoys. Melvin Foote, executive director of CFA now thinks that the primary hope for passage of a trade bill with Africa

Briefs

now rests with the leadership of the African American community.

"Despite the fact this bill provides great opportunity especially for African American entrepreneurs, there was no concerted pressure for its passage by the African-American leadership," he said. "Frankly speaking, other ethnic groups in America are wondering why they should be concerned about African issues if African Americans are not showing concern."

Commerce, IBM join forces to aid small businesses

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency and IBM have entered into a new public/private sector relationship to promote opportunities and growth with the small business community through information technology.

Under the arrangement, IBM will provide technology-related services, solutions, product offerings and pertinent information to MBDA's clients, which include nearly 30,000 minority-owned businesses.

Look for the '98 issue of the Black Guide at a location near you.

CAROLINA'S LARGEST BRIDAL SHOW!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 1998
10AM-5PM



Weddings

Brought To You By Dillard's

- TOP LOCAL BANDS . . .
- BRIDAL FASHION SHOWS . . .
- ALL DAY ENTERTAINMENT IN CJs . . .
- ONE STOP BRIDAL SHOPPING . . .



The Charlotte Observer

Show Information, Registration and Tickets

375-7979



Win Win!

- Matching Diamond Wedding Bands Courtesy of Alison Love's Fine Jewelry
- Honeymoon Courtesy AAA, Listen to KISS 95.1 FM For Details
- Honeymoon Courtesy Mann Travels, Listen To WSOC-103.7 FM For Details
- Disney Honeymoon Vacation



If it's denim, it's on sale

All men's Lee®, Canyon River Blues® and Levi's® jeans



sale 17⁹⁹

A. Fieldmaster denim shirts
All cotton in solid colors and patterns. Sizes S-3XL, LT, XLT. Reg. \$28-\$30
All other woven shirts also on sale



sale 21⁹⁹

B. Men's Lee® regular and relaxed fit jeans
Shown: Stonewash, bleach or black.
Prewash regular fit, 19.99
Riveted loose fit, wide-leg, 24.99
Unlined denim jacket, 39.99

sale 19⁹⁹

C. All men's Canyon River Blues® classic, relaxed and loose fit jeans
Choose from stonewash, bleach or black finishes.
Unlined denim jacket, 29.99



25% OFF SELECTED 30 YEAR SHINGLES
Selected styles. When purchased installed.

ROOF REPAIR
now available**

Ask About Our Custom Mobile Home Roofovers

No Money Down and No Payment Until May 1998*

50% OFF SELECTED CHAIN LINK FENCING FABRIC
Selected styles. Installation, gates, posts and accessories sold at regular price. Min. 150 ft.

WOOD FENCING ALSO AVAILABLE

HURRY, OFFERS END 12/13/97
CALL FOR A FREE IN-HOME ESTIMATE

1 800 311-0742 Ext. 2038
Sold, Furnished and Installed by Diamond Exteriors, Inc., a SEARS Authorized Contractor

SEARS
Come see the many sides of Sears
©1997 Sears, Roebuck and Co.
Satisfaction Guaranteed or Your Money Back.

*Ask Sales Representative for details. **No monthly payments until May 1998 on SEARS Delivered Credit Option. You must request this option. Finance charges accrue from the date of purchase. Ask Sales Representative for details.
**Minimum repair charge applies. License No.s: AZ: 99845, CA: 673780, CT: 545602, FL: CCO051571, CR0038112, CCO057201, KS: Wichita 951, MA: 115465, MD: MHC45858, NH: 55118, NV: 30168, 30169, 30170, NY: H18C1780000, 21, 439-H, 922975, W-5482-H83, OR: 92838, RI: 11177, TN: H801514, VA: 2705-021271A, WA: DIAMOE077NS, WV: 023758.