

# INGENUITY OR IGNORANCE?

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The following is not a dramatization. You are about to encounter the real people and events that happened at New York Fashions in Sanford, North Carolina on March 9, 1996. The perpetrator, you ask? You decide.

Three teenagers enter your business. Your store claims to cater to the Hip-Hop world, offering a wide variety of clothes that would satisfy the wanna-be's, the thugs, the preps, the lady-impressers, and the athletes. Yet, this time you feel different; a little queasy.

Something isn't right.

Two of these teenagers have on, what you think to be, the two fattest gold chains that you have ever seen. The other teenager, a girl, looks as if she could be a runway model.

The three immediately go to the shoe section to look at your latest Nike models. You send your daughter over to help them, while you keep your own two eyes on them—one watchful and one fearful.

Your store seems to be the only one in the state that still carries the new white and blue patent-leather Air Jordans. One of the teenage boys asks you to get a size eight for, what you believe to be, his girlfriend. (This group must have money you think; perhaps they are dealers.) Your daughter emerges from the shoe store-room, and tells you that there are no more Air Jordans. You already knew that fact, however, as that one Jordan on the shelf serves as a nice gimmick to get customers to buy.

You tell the group the bad news. But wait. The girl teenager sees some other shoes she likes, white Air Pennys. They cost even more than the Air Jordans and you happily send your daughter to the store-room to retrieve a pair. She comes back, and the girl tries the shoe on for a fit. The boy, who looks like he could be Puerto Rican, tells the girl to go ahead and put both shoes on her feet.

Your thoughts are confirmed.

These teenagers are trying to rob you. Thoughts swirl in a frenzy through your head, as you begin to be frightened. You go outside the store and lock the doors, so that the three cannot leave the store. You run across the street, and you get two husky looking men. Five minutes later, you come back in the store and point the three individuals out to the men who remain standing by the door.

The group of teenagers laugh at your paranoid acts and continue to walk around the store. The Puerto Rican-looking boy grabs two pairs of jeans and heads into the dressing room. Your eyes and the "security guards" eyes all shift to the boy when he comes back in the store, to make sure he hasn't pulled one of those "ghetto tricks" and stolen something. The three teenagers converse and you overhear their names — Niko, Koko, and Logan (in case you need to file a police report).

Niko, the Puerto-Rican looking teenager, comes to the counter and tells you he's ready to pay. The total comes to over \$200. He reaches his hand into his pocket.

You think this could be it — the end. His hand emerges from his coat and . . . he gives you his Visa-Check card.

You immediately tell him that the phones are broken and that you can't accept his card since you can't verify it. You tell him he needs cash and you begin to put his jeans under the counter, and tell the girl to take the shoes off her feet. The boy abruptly halts you and tells you that he will go across the street to the bank to get the money. He goes to the door, and you remember that you must unlock it first.

While he's gone, someone calls you on the phone. You are happy that he didn't see that. He comes back in with the money and pays for the shoes and jeans. You are relieved; you made money and you avoided a nasty confrontation with those "street thugs."

You over hear the girl talk to Niko.

"Thanks Niko, you're the best brother I could have."

He tells her, "Happy Birthday, Koko!" You tell the three to have a good day. Niko tells you to have a good day in return as he smirks, and you hear him tell his sister something like, "Ignorance is what you saw today. Never come back."

Typical street thugs, you think.

You are happy with the decisions you made. You locked the door to avoid theft. You brought in the two men to avoid robbery. You lied about the phones to avoid using a stolen credit card. You also think that the \$200 is drug money. "Oh, well", you think, "another DAY, another PAY." You grin one last time as you see the reflected sun from those huge gold chains in the corner of your eye. "Another DAY, another PAY."

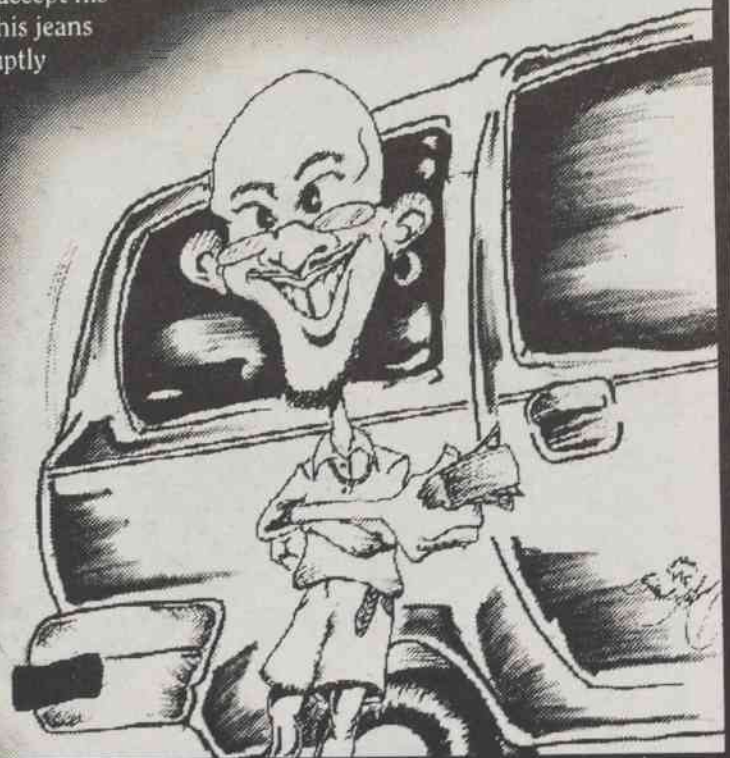


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