



June 22, 2004

Julius H. Gewirtz  
President  
Joyce Leslie, Inc.  
135 W Commercial  
Moonachie, NJ 07074

Dear Mr. Gewirtz:

Violence against women is not trendy, hip or cool. It has been brought to our attention that Joyce Leslie is selling shirts to young women which say "*You Can Beat Me, You Can Abuse Me, But Don't Touch My Hair Or I'll Kill You.*" This statement conveys two very damaging messages about young girls—they deserve to be beaten, and looks are their most important asset. We demand that you take these shirts off the racks today.

Your shirt promotes and condones the epidemic of violence against young women in our country. Women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest per capita rates of domestic violence. Thirty-three percent of teenagers will experience some degree of violence from boyfriends. Tragically, this violence is sometimes fatal for young women. Thirty percent of teenage girls who are killed are killed by a boyfriend or former boyfriend. Your shirt suggests that this violence is acceptable and makes light of a serious problem that jeopardizes the lives and safety of millions of young women each year.

In the same breath that it trivializes domestic violence, your shirt suggests that the only thing teenage girls care about is their hair. By reducing young women to such a superficial level, you perpetuate the very oppressive attitudes that have harmed women for hundreds of years.

Teenagers are susceptible to peer-pressure, clothing trends and the urge to "fit in." Your store markets to and profits from these very characteristics. As such, you have a responsibility to bolster teenage girls' self-image, not discount the struggles with violence and self-image that girls face. For these reasons, the California Women's Law Center demands that you immediately remove these shirts from your stores.

Sincerely,

Marjorie R. Sims  
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