

# Sweatshop Holiday Catalog 2002

*The clothes we love.  
The secrets we hate.*



Dress, page 3



# BRYLANE

Dear Customer,

This holiday season everyone will be looking for good deals. The economy is slow, and our wallets thin.

Brylane catalogs—which include Lane Bryant, Lerner and Roaman’s—might seem like a great place to find gifts for your family and friends.

But there’s a problem. When you look at a Brylane catalog, you’ll see clothes you like. You won’t see the secrets behind them. Workers at the Brylane distribution center in Indianapolis work hard to get you your clothes on time. But more than 10% of the workers suffer from repetitive motion injuries. And Brylane clothes are made in sweatshops across the globe.

Brylane’s parent company is one of the world’s largest retailers. Pinault-Printemps-Redoute, PPR, operates in 65 countries, and also owns famous labels like Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent.

Our holiday catalog tells shoppers the story behind Brylane fashion. If you want more information, give us a call at 1-800-23-UNITE, or look us up on the web at [www.behindthelabel.org](http://www.behindthelabel.org).

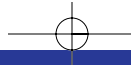
**Happy Holidays from the women & men at Brylane!**



**A**

**A.** Sandra Stroup, 53, has worked at Brylane as a dock unloader for 10 years. Her Brylane sweater was made in Thailand where workers have to stay 20 to a room in company-owned housing. They pay rent to their bosses, yet are not allowed any visitors, not even their own children.

**B.** “I work hard to help take care of my 5 grandchildren, and I get to hold them and love them almost every day. It’s hard for me to think the clothes that I unload on our docks come from places like Thailand, where workers can’t spend time with their kids,” says Sandra.



# One in 10 workers at Brylane suffers from a repetitive motion injury.



**B**

Brylane clothes are made in sweatshops

**C**



**E**



**D**

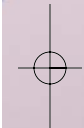


*Because of work, Karen Rico, 25, needed surgery on her shoulder.*

**C.** Karen Rico, 25, and her two daughters are pictured on the cover. Karen has worked at Brylane in the warehouse for 4 years. She drives a stand-up forklift, operates a crane that lifts boxes 60 feet into the air and stacks boxes by hand. During an average 8-hour shift, she throws 5,000 boxes into 100 storage cages.

**D.** The work puts tremendous strain on Karen's left shoulder, as she uses it to steer in a circular motion. "I am a young woman. Because of the strain of my work, I had to have surgery this year," says Karen.

**E.** "I know it can be different," adds Karen. At Brylane's sister facility in Massachusetts, workers have a union, an active health and safety committee and rules about ergonomics. There, repetitive motion injuries are a small fraction of those at Brylane.





# Brylane's parent company

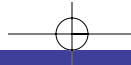


As soon as she started working in the Returns Department, Minnie began asking management to make the work safe. The company hasn't done so yet.

**A.** Since 1992, Marilyn Farris (known as Minnie), 53, has worked in the Returns Department, throwing heavy items like the Brylane coat she's wearing.

**B.** "I've had surgery 5 times because management won't make my job safe. I want a union because Brylane cares so little about workers' safety," says Minnie.

**C.** Minnie's Brylane dress was made in India, where sweatshops are rampant. Brylane's parent company uses contractors in India who pay less than 1¢ per garment.



# ny tripled profits in three years.



**D.** American workers aren't the only ones who suffer because of Brylane. Most of the clothes that workers in the Indianapolis distribution center handle come from countries where sweatshops are common. Brylane clothes are made in Bandung, Indonesia where teenagers as young as 15 work up to 14 hours per day, 7 days per week. Sometimes they are required to work through the night to meet rush orders. Some workers have collapsed from exhaustion; others have developed respiratory problems because of the unhealthy work environment.

**E.** Some Brylane clothing is sewn in Indian sweatshops, like the one pictured here.

In Tirupur, India, workers sew Brylane clothes for as many as 13 hours per day, 6 days per week. They earn as little as 10¢ an hour, less than the Indian minimum wage.







## Global pain for Brylane gain



"I worked so hard to keep up that by the time I got home I hurt so badly, I couldn't go to sleep. I lay awake with my shoulder burning and my hands numb. I couldn't brush my own hair or pull it back to fix it."



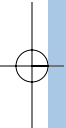
**A.** Melody Purvis went to work in Brylane's Returns Department in 1993. She's wearing a Brylane dress, the kind she processed by the hundreds.

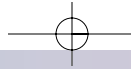
**B.** In 1999, Melody earned an award for her productivity, for throwing up to 600 packages of clothing per shift overhead onto a conveyor belt.

But the strain caused physical harm. Melody has had surgery on both wrists and on her shoulder.

In 2002, Brylane fired Melody, a union activist who was trying to improve working conditions. The company is contesting her workers' compensation claim.

**C.** The Returns Department handles clothes from all over the world, including the Philippines. Contractors there pay workers far below the local minimum wage and fail to provide required health care and social security benefits.





“Brylane doesn't want us to tell people about the safety problems at work. We want a union so that we can say what's wrong, and help make things right!”

**D**  
**E**

**D.** Greta Casey, 32, is wearing a Brylane blouse that has moved through the Shipping Department, where she has been filling orders for 10 years.

**E.** Brylane's Indianapolis distribution center is a dangerous place to work: “Three years ago a bag-sealing machine caught my arm. The safety shut-off did not work. I got a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burn and plastic embedded

in my hand,” says Greta. “When I came back from the emergency room, my supervisor asked me to sign a waiver that said that the accident was my fault!”

It's this kind of treatment that led Brylane workers at the Indianapolis distribution center to start a campaign for workers' rights and union representation.



### Putting People First

We're coming together and telling Brylane to put the rights of workers first. Safe working conditions, a living wage and respect must be the rights of all workers—from India to Indianapolis. Our friends in the U.S., Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Australia and Japan are helping us spread this message.

In the spring of 2002, Melody Purvis (above right) testified on our behalf before a Congressional committee on ergonomics and workplace safety. Also, Greta Casey (above left) led a delegation to Paris, France—home of PPR's headquarters—to tell European trade unionists about our struggle.

We're committed to making things better at Brylane in Indianapolis. That's why we're organizing a union with UNITE. But we're concerned about more than ourselves. We're helping PPR workers—and there are thousands of us across the world—to put an end to sweatshops. Fashion isn't worth the human price we now pay.

**Happy Holidays from the women & men at Brylane!**





