

It's All Greek To Me

By Reg P. Wydeven
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I loved going to law school at UW in Madison. Growing up in Kimberly and going to college in Eau Claire didn't expose me to diversity of food. But the Capitol had restaurants featuring cuisine from around the globe. One night my buddies took me to the Parthenon, where they introduced me to gyros.

A gyro is a Greek dish featuring shaved lamb on a pita with tomatoes and onions. They are served with tzatziki sauce that I enhanced with some ketchup (much to the proprietor's dismay). Gyros are absolutely delicious, and I'm grateful that today they're more readily available at establishments like Josef's and Niko's.

Because I love them so much, I thought it was an excellent idea when I heard the European Union established the gyro as the continent's uniform currency in 1999. I remember hoping the U.S. would do the same, so I could sell Wills to clients in exchange for a dozen of the delicious dishes.

I was understandably dismayed when I learned that even though they are pronounced the same, gyros are completely different than euros. I'm not alone, though, in being confused about the currency.

Devin Rose recently filed a class-action lawsuit in a federal district court in Los Angeles against Zara, an upscale European clothier, for allegedly engaging in deceptive pricing practices. According to the \$5 million-plus proposed lawsuit, in its U.S. stores, Zara often only lists their prices on clothing in euros. Rose asserts that this is not only confusing, but worse, Zara charges its customers much more than the correct conversion rate.

Rose sued Zara after buying three shirts from their Sherman Oaks location in May. According to the suit, when he made the purchases, "the actual euro-dollar exchange rate would have resulted in his €9.95 shirts costing approximately \$11.26 each. Instead, however, Zara charged Mr. Rose \$17.90 per garment, a markup of nearly 60%." Rose claims that "behind its façade of attainable elegance, Zara is engaged in a widespread practice of deceiving American consumers through a classic bait and switch."

The lawsuit requests that Zara start to accurately convert its prices right at the register and that "similarly situated" individuals, or those that made a purchase at one of Zara's U.S. stores around the same time as Rose, can join the case and share the settlement amount.

A spokesperson for the chain gave a statement to The Fashion Law saying, "Zara USA vehemently denies any allegations that the company engages in deceptive pricing practices in the United States." While the store hadn't seen the lawsuit, the spokesperson went on to say, "We pride ourselves in our fundamental commitment to transparency and honest, ethical conduct with our valued customers. We remain focused on providing excellent customer service and high-quality fashion products at great value for our customers. We look forward to presenting our full defense in due course through the legal process."

In response, Rose's attorney, Ben Meiselas of Geragos & Geragos, issued a statement the next day claiming, "Zara's response so far has been beyond bizarre and desperate." He went on to repeat the store's allegedly illegal practices and warned, "If Zara wants to double down on its duplicity, instead of acting like a responsible corporate citizen and fixing the mess of its own making, they should be prepared to face the wrath of the American consumer and the full force of the law."

Even if Zara did nothing wrong, they better get a good lawyer because that is one of the greatest quotes I have ever heard.

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