

Lawsuit: Walmart Locks Up African-American Beauty Products

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Plaintiff Essie Grundie and her attorney Gloria Allred. Photo courtesy of Sputnik News.[/caption]

Summary: An African-American woman in California said that Walmart blatantly discriminates against black customers.

A California woman is suing Walmart for racial discrimination. She said when she visited a store in Perris, California, she was shocked to find all of the African-American beauty products were shelved behind locked glass--including a 49 cent comb.

Essie Grundy, 43, spoke to KCBS and said that she had purchased a 49 cent comb at a nearby Riverside Walmart with no problem, but when she wanted to buy another one for her kids, she had to go to the Perris location because her hometown store was out of stock.

Grundy said it shocked her to find that all African-American beauty products were locked behind glass. She said that she had complained to management, who refused to make any changes.

"[The comb] was such a good product, I wanted to introduce it to my older children," Grundy said to KCBS. "They didn't have any more at the original Walmart that I got it from, so I went to my neighborhood one, and that's when I noticed all of the African-American products were locked up under lock and key."

Grundy is represented by attorney Gloria Allred, who has asked that a court halt Walmart's practice of locking up the products made for African-American consumers. Allred did not state how much in damages Grundy is seeking.

"I just feel that we need to be treated equal," Grundy said to [KTLA](#). "It's no way that we should be treated ... just because of a complexion. We are all human and we deserve to be treated as everyone else."

Allred told [Newsweek](#) that products for other races were not locked up, and that African-American customers who wanted the locked products had to ask a store associate for help. Then to add to their humiliation, they had to be escorted to a cashier to pay for their items.

"It perpetuates a racial stereotype that African-Americans are thieves," Allred said at a press conference.

Walmart spokesman Charles Crowson said that the company does not discriminate and that stores' decisions to lock certain products happen because those products are at a greater risk of theft.

"We're sensitive to this situation and also understand, like other retailers, that some products such as electronics, automotive, cosmetics and other personal care products are subject to additional security," Crowson said to WSB-TV. "Those determinations are made on a store-by-store basis using data supporting."

- [Granny Gem Thief Nabbed Again at Walmart](#)
- [Walmart Yet to Pay Fine for Death of Employee on Black Friday](#)
- [Walmart To Be Reimbursed by Insurance for Tracy Morgan Settlement](#)

What do you think of Grundy's lawsuit against Wal-Mart? Let us know in the comments below.