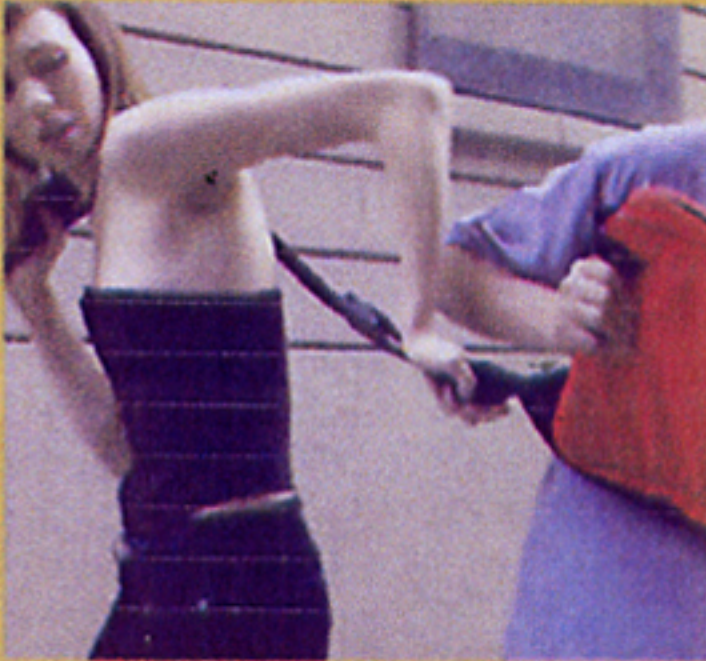


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FUTURE SHOCK: THE COMING IDEAS IN CRIME PREVENTION CLOTHES



Karrysafe, the first company in Europe to design bags and fashion accessories which protect users against street crime, was launched in 2001. Louis Vuitton it ain't – how about bright red nylon with Velcro and built in alarms? – but it can be effective.

The bags guard against the four top methods of street theft: 'dipping' (by pickpockets), grabbing, lifting and slashing. If grabbed, for example, the strap gives way, allowing the thief to take the bag without resorting to violence. Then it triggers a 138-decibel alarm that they cannot turn off.

Anti-crime measures have been taken to the level of fabric too. 'Techno-textiles' are increasingly being used to foil criminals, with polymers such as Kevlar and Nomex, which are stab-, slash-, and bulletproof, incorporated into bag and jacket designs.

Levi's has already produced an 'e-wear' jacket, in conjunction with Philips. Pioneered at MIT in Boston, 'e-wear' has become a strong interest area for electronics and clothing manufacturers. With street crime on the rise, a key issue is the portability and visibility of items such as mobile phones, personal stereos and computers. The Levi's jacket was an attempt to design a garment that could both carry, with comfort, these