

Fool for Love

NEW YORK — Brian Sack found out the hard way that money can't buy love. It can, however, in a circuitous, slightly odd way, buy a little slice of fame. In early September, Sack put a pair of black leather DKNY pants on eBay for the bargain price of \$5. While they sold for a relatively cheap \$102.50, the real find was the ad itself, a witty, self-deprecating, full-disclosure snippet of buyer's remorse and the lengths to which people will go for love — he bought the pants almost a decade ago for \$300 just to impress a girl. Two months after he placed it, the ad has spawned an international e-mail chain, resulting in more than two million hits to his eBay page, as well as writing job offers from television networks and appearances on NPR, among others.

"You are bidding on a mistake," read Sack's opening teaser. "We all make mistakes. We date the wrong people for too long. We chew gum with our mouths open. We say inappropriate things in front of grandma. And we buy leather pants." Sack picked up his pair at the prompting of a girl he was, in his own words, trying to bed. "I wanted to have a relationship of sorts with her," he continued in his ad. Alas, he didn't get the girl, and the pants served as an embarrassing reminder.

Sack, who lives in Chelsea, went on to explain the kind of guy who can pull off leather pants. "Brave men. Perhaps tattooed, pierced men." He assured potential buyers that the pants had never been worn.

"For reasons unknown — perhaps to keep my options open in case I wanted to become a pirate — I have shuffled these unworn pants from house to house," he wrote. "They were never taken on pirate expeditions. They weren't worn onstage. They didn't straddle a Harley, or a guy named Harley. They just hung there, sad and ignored, for a few presidencies."



Brian Sack, eBay connoisseur and funny man for hire.

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— Brian Sack's eBay ad for DKNY leather pants

His ad struck a nerve — his inbox is clogged daily with e-mails from readers around the world, including several marriage proposals and a few perverse ones he'd rather not share. More gratifying, though, are the missives he's received about how his eBay ad cheered people up. "There are nice ones from people who have cancer who say they hadn't smiled in a long time," he told WWD last week.

After 22 bids, the winner of the pants was an eBay rookie, a gentleman from Tallahassee, Fla. "He's just some guy," said Sack, who won't reveal the winner's name. "I don't know if he wants to be identified. He might be regretting it."

Sack, meanwhile, is an eBay veteran, having sold around 75 items — all with equal parts banter and quality control — including sweaters, electronic gizmos and a box of wine corks that went to an HBO producer for \$11. "Apparently, there's a market for everything," he said. A full set of gold-plated Versace flatware, however, still sits in his closet after failed attempts to unload it on the Internet at a starting bid price of \$3,500. No bids may have been due to his pitch: "Appalling Flatware for Sale."

Sack is actually an accomplished writer who has written for *The Independent*, *Radar*, *Glamour* and *McSweeney's*, though the latter hasn't paid him yet, he added. And if you're quick, that was Sack eating a salad behind Sarah Jessica Parker and Candice Bergen in a restaurant scene in "Sex and the City." Online, he's known as the popular blogger *Banterist*. By day, he coheads *Sixty Second Airborne*, a national radio production company. "It's just funny," Sack said. "I'm amazed that, after all the stuff I've done, the thing that opened the most doors was an eBay ad I wrote in 10 minutes."

And what about the two women inadvertently responsible for Sack's success: Donna Karan and the girl who prompted the purchase? Sack worries that the designer might not be pleased with him, but the Karan crew has had a hearty chuckle over the ad. "It went around the office and all of our stores," said Patti Cohen, the company's executive vice president and the designer's right hand. "Donna's traveling right now, but I know she would want to meet him and dress him in some newer things. She'd want to take him shopping."

As for the young lady he tried to woo in vain, Sack, who's now happily married and the father of an infant son, wishes her well. "If I could track her down, I'd say, 'Thanks for making it happen by not making it happen.'"

— Nandini D'Souza



The now-famous DKNY leather pants.