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FASHION POLICE GO AFTER A WAR CRIMINAL

By DANICA LO

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May 21, 2005 -- New York fashionistas say Saddam Hussein is no underwear model.

When it come to strutting his stuff in tightie-whities, he doesn't measure up to greats like Jockey's Jim Palmer or Calvin Klein's Marky Mark — or even Cosmo Kramer, who famously parodied the Klein ads on "Seinfeld."

The Saddam photo, taken at a secret, U.S.-run prison, "is sad on so many levels," said Richard Ruiz, who designs menswear line Dick by Richard. "Not least of which is that at least 90 percent of men are wearing the same high-waisted droopy drawers!"

Many critics were less than sympathetic about the ex-dictator's drawers dilemma and agree that he had committed the No. 1 fashion faux pas of 2005.

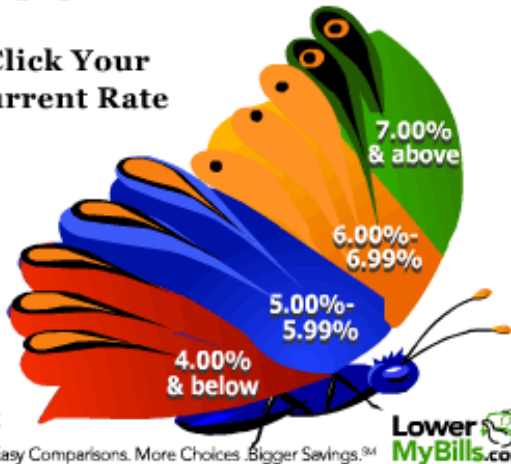
"Saddam appears to be wearing Hanes Her Way," says Damien Fahey, host of MTV's "TRL." "But he's missing the matching bra."

The Post called an underwear expert to find out what Saddam was thinking.

"If you're wearing great underwear, you feel like a million bucks. Clearly, Saddam must feel like crap," says Jason Scarletti, head designer at men's underwear company 2(x)ist.

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"I think his underwear is basic and average — it looks like Hanes to me. What purpose are his briefs serving him?"

In fact, almost everyone we spoke to was surprised at Saddam's choice.

"Tighty-whities are too tame," says Leslie Gold, "The Radio Chick" of Sirius Satellite Radio.

"You would think someone nicknamed 'The Butcher of Baghdad' would go commando."

But going *au naturel* just isn't for everyone.

"If I were Saddam, I would rock some French-cut bikini briefs," says Jimmy Jellinek, editor-in-chief of Stuff magazine.

"Shave him a little bit, cut his hair and oil him up and he could be the big gay stud at a Lebanese disco. Hell, I'd party with him."

Others suggested modesty.

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"I recommend he wear long, loose boxers," says Joseph Kadi, designer of menswear line Joseph's Cloak. "The key to looking your best after becoming a deposed tyrant is to cover up as much as you can."

Since Saddam will likely have a long stretch in prison before being executed, he should make comfort a priority.

"If I was in jail for the rest of my life, I'd wear 2(x)ist's Pima cotton briefs because they're luxurious and really comfortable," said Scarletti.

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