

Check This Out

Maybe it's me. My tolerance tank has always been a quart or two light of the gallon, but I'm quite certain it is not my imagination. I told myself this over and over, as I stood in the line, blood pressure certainly not normal, but still some headroom. As always, I questioned my decision. I thought about it very carefully just minutes before, looking for the one of the few faces I may have recognized. Knowing the number of carts ahead of you is never a guaranteed indicator, I leaped into aisle 17, propelled only by instinct. The cashier looked adequate; a smooth, one beep scan, teeth, and a key chain. Her demeanor changed, as did mine, as her wrinkled left arm flipped the silver switch, illuminating the large number above my head, causing it to flash. This is never good. Especially at this point, since I immediately realized the old woman who once had a shoe is in front of me, accompanied by her in-laws and grandchildren for the first time, now probably wishing her checkbook was as easy to find as her ovaries. I looked ahead, crying, the agony just starting to develop.

Am I the only one who has craved my next meal standing in a line that should be moving, but never is? With all the high speed, wave of the future technology, why I am still waiting fifty five minutes to buy paper towels and cat litter? I did it in '78 in less than seven. Debit cards, credit cards, credit my debit cards, ATMs, metallic strips, all this signing and smiling, license numbers and current addresses..... WHEW!! It's a bit overwhelming. And also quite maddening. Sadly, I'm quite aware that I am in the minority here. But goddamn. I must remain one of the rare few who still use cash to buy things, but when I have to explain "that's a twenty", the frustration will set in. I remained patient. But trembling.

As my soft stubble matured to a beard and one of the toddlers preceding me began to grow, I painfully realized prompt service was not a priority here. And if it was, I wasn't going to see it. The light above me continued to flash as the line behind me lengthened at a rapid rate. So I stood there. Waiting. I then continued to wait and stand, telling myself as long as I stood there and waited everything would be all right. I waited there for a while, standing, and finally began to move towards the register. I'm not sure how many kids I kicked before I got there, but I finally smiled as I reached for my wallet, realizing no one else did either. I retracted my fangs and smirked at the cashier, replacing my "you're lucky you're still alive" with a "good, how are you?" to her initial question. I paid for my items, the Tidy Scoop surely no longer necessary to the furry, stiff carcass curled at the end of my bed. I looked at my watch (for about the eleventh time) and grabbed my bag exposing my fingers pruned from sweat, my smile marred by my bloody lower lip now hanging from my front teeth. I was through the line now, the rage slowly subsiding, as I watched the store manager replace his framed picture behind the counter with his son's. This took way too long.

I then proceeded to exit, cynical and confused, angry for my wasted time. Why does this have to happen? I continued to walk and ignored the large family I hated earlier stuck in the automatic door, the poor mother looking for her son and receipt at the same time. It shouldn't be this way. Shopping shouldn't make me so livid. I was pissed and dreamed one day for a solution.

Cash only lanes? More competent tellers? Open more aisles? Limit idiocy? Therapy?

Something needs to get me out of that store in under a decade. Fuck.

Then again.....maybe it's just me.