

Backing up at Wal-Mart

by Larry Strattner

I backed my car out of a tight slot between two SUVs at Wal-Mart. My wife screamed, "Look out! Look out!" arms waving; scaring the living shit out of me.

I slammed on the brakes. The car rocked at my sudden stop from .00006 miles per hour. The huge guy reflected in my rear view mirror lumbered behind my car on his way to the cheap groceries. Never even gave me a glance.

I checked my five rear-view mirrors before backing up. That's right, five. A center mirror with auto-dimming and a compass, two side mirrors trimmed to the side lines of the car and two parabolics to cover the blind spots. Fuck me. The Wal-Mart slug walked right out from behind the Dodge Durango and across my path. I was moving extra slow with my back-up lights on. No matter he was a mouth breathing Deliverance refugee he was still a Presbyterian. If I ran him over it would have dire consequences in Penalty Points.

"Jesus," I said to my wife, "you scared me half to death."

"Didn't you even see him?" Her voice a couple octaves above civilized conversation.

"How could I? The asshole came out of nowhere. He was oblivious. If he was conscious he didn't give a shit, just kept on walking. Figures to retire on whoever hits him at Wal-Mart. The fuck."

"Please don't talk that way. Be more careful in these parking lots." She was calming down.

Fuck 'more careful,' I'm thinking. The Gulf oil spill is caused by the people driving these goddamn SUVs all over. Mix SUVs with idiots and you have a stupidity slick all over the parking lot. I've already got five mirrors.

I go down to my local auto store and order a set of back-up sensors. These attach to the car's rear bumper. Their function is, while the car is in reverse, to Beep with increasing frequency as I get close to an object or person. It will be impossible to get behind

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me without me knowing. I drive my car home and do a test on a garbage can. They work.

Two days later I'm back at Wal-Mart picking up some items made by children locked in a Quonset hut in Sri Lanka. I get the stuff and return to the lot. Parked on one side of me is a panel van. On the other side a Dodge Power Wagon with tires bigger than my car.

I back out of my slot veeerrry carefully. Like some perverse choreography an asshole walks from behind the Power Wagon and into my path. 'Beep, beep, beep,' go my backup sensors. I stab my brakes. The tires give a squeak. The asshole jumps back, startled, and gives me the finger.

Well now, I think, throw the car back in reverse and start for him again. Beep, beep, beep. He dodges. I correct. 'Beep, beep, beep, beep.' I don't even need the rear view mirror. He is sprinting back down the aisle. 'Beep, beep, beep, beep, beep.' I can home in on him while backing up without even looking. Beep, beep. There's a satisfying Thump! The car rocks slightly; like over a speed bump. I pull forward and 'Beep, beep,' pick him up in the sensors again. Shift back in reverse, 'Beep, beep, beep.' Thump! Over him once again for good measure.

On my way home I'm thinking, these fucking backup sensors are really cool! They are the action-oriented solution for bovinity!

