

Burger King Blues

by Robert Crisman

Read signs sometimes and you just might get where you're trying to go.

When Eddie suggested they stop for a Whopper, Dennis said no. "Fuck Burger King, man. Let's get that Wendy's up there."

They got in and got out and got back on the road. Dennis scarfed the last of his french fries and tossed the sack on the floor. He had Bluto's manners. He looked like him too.

"Hey, man," Eddie said, "what're you, a fucking hobo or something? For Chrissake, why don't you--here." He handed the sack the food came in to Dennis. "Put it in there with the rest of the shit and toss it in back."

The back seat had a half-ton of garbage piled up.

Dennis tossed the bag back. "You oughtta clean this fuckin' car, man. You probly got rats an' dead winos crawlin' around back there."

"Yeah, kinda like your pad."

Dennis let out a belch and jerked his head back toward the drive-in. "Wendy's, man, they're okay. Burger King though, uh uh. Whole different story. Last time I ever went in one... Fuck. Supposed to be fast food, right? My ass. go in there, there's about 10,000 people in line. Looked like they're waitin' to get into *Star Wars* or somethin'. Big giggly gang of junior high school broads right in front of me, right? I'm in there, it's hot, it's fuckin' July, I'm sweatin' like a hog, an' I want some ice cream. I mean, I really *wanted* some. I'm in this line, you know I wanted some ice cream. Strawberry, man, if they had it.

"Musta been National Shit Food Day, man, swear to God. All these damn *people*. Mommy an' Daddy an' ten million kids, an' they're down there spendin' the rent, an' you shoulda seen it. Everybody gets up there, they're orderin' the store. Whoppers an' french fries an' every other damn thing in the world, an' Joey wants six, an' Mary'll take pickles on hers, an' Jimmy, the whole goddamn

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works, fuckin' pig, an' how about a bib there for Billy, who's pickin' his nose an' wipin' it on the old man's pants up ahead? An' meanwhile, there's all these kids yellin' an' bawlin' an' screamin'-- An' *then*, man, these *women*! Why is it, man, they're never ready with the fuckin' money when it comes time to pay? They didn't know it was *comin'*? An' then, guy gives 'em the bill, they dive in their purse, it's like they dived in the ocean or somethin', for pearls or some fuckin' thing, *way* down deep in there, they shoulda had snorkels. An' they rummage around for forty-five minutes, finally come up with the Visa or somethin', ain't *never* got cash, am I right? Somethin' might speed this whole process up, not a chance.

"So they run the card through, an' we're waitin' an' waitin', it finally comes through an' it's good--or it *ain't*, in which case she's pissin' an' moanin', an' eight *more* days wasted. An' it's this an' it's that, she gets the card back, an' shoves it back in with the tampax an' sea kelp an' shit, an' gathers her other crap up off the counter, her car keys an' diapers an' travel brochures or whatever. An' she's fumblin' around, an' she *drops* half the shit, an' so, she gets down there to pick the shit up, an' she's sortin' it out on the floor an' she's got the counter blocked off--an' her *cell phone* goes off! Swear to God, man, an' it's playin' some tune, Michael Bolton or some fuckin' thing, who knows, an' she reaches to get it an' drops some *more* stuff an'--I swear, I'm on *acid*! Walls turnin' colors an' shit an' snakes comin' right through the door an'--I can't believe this is *happenin'*, man!

"People are keelin' over in line, hunger, heat stroke, old fuckin' age, name the poison an'--*Man*!

"*Finally*, man, she gets her shit off the floor. The world starts back breathin'. They give her a number. She goes an' sits down. Next fuckin' dingbat.

"There's more where she came from. Line's movin' now, an' it's kinda like rocks bein' born or some shit. Sun rises, sun sets, this broad in the line, she was six when she got there, look at her now, she's got a *bra* on, size 36C, an' the guys in the line, they wanna eat *her*."

Eddie busted out laughing.

"You think I'm shittin' you, man," Dennis said. "An' meanwhile, *now*, them junior high bitches in front of me there? They're havin' a *whale* of a time. It's an *adventure* for them. We finally get up to the front. They're gonna order--but *first* they gotta consult. Make sure they know what they want, or they're in the right place, or some fuckin' thing, I dunno, so they huddle. Keep sneakin' peeks at the sign that got all the prices. Whisper an' giggle, *tee hee hee hee*. Huddle some more. What *is* this, man, a run up the middle? Quarterback sneak to a touchdown or somethin'? Goddamn, I'm fuckin' *dyin'*! Guy at the *register's* dyin'. I just wanna *shoot* 'em.

"These fuckin' *bitches*. They couldn't nail what they wanted *before* they hopped in the line, am I right? Oh fuck no. Too fuckin' simple an' God didn't make 'em that way, like with elementary brains or nothin' like that. They get to the room where they're passin' out brains an' the woodchucks been through an' snatched up the last ones they had, an' God tells 'em tough, an' boots 'em on down, an' they wander around like hoboes or somethin', an' then they get hungry. *Time to grease down!* On to the Burger King, man! Them an' the rest of the clucks in the world.

"This one broad, *goddamn*. Five feet both ways, looked like she just ate Wyoming. Tell her haul ass, it takes her two trips. So you *know* she's orderin' the whole goddamn franchise, they're shippin' in cows an' it's hours an' *hours* for this broad to get done--an' then *finally*, it's *my* turn! Hot damn! Gimme my ice cream!

"Dude drops the bad news. They *got* no ice cream at Burger King, man. I--*what?* No *ice cream?* I cannot *believe* it! I'm gonna *cry*! Guy at the register, it looks like he's gonna cry too.

"The guy--this is funny. He wants to help. Keep me from killin' myself with the gun. Tells me there's Whoppers on sale. Ninety-nine cents. Do I want one of those? Do I want one of *those?* I *am* gonna cry. The *whopper's* grazin' like eighty-six goats at the table, her an' her buddies, an' *me*, man, I'm shit outta luck! *No*, man, no Whopper! All I want now is the *door!* Do I want a Whopper. Jesus H. Christ."

Eddie busted out laughing again. "Man, you know what?"

Dennis gave him a look and said, "What?"

"You shoulda huddled up with them girls and saved yourself some heartache and grief, you know what I'm saying?"

"Man, just--fuck you."

"*Seriously*, man, I can see it. You and the Chubster are crouched in the middle. She calls a double reverse and sends you out long to Baskin and Robbins and--"

"Man, kiss my ass." Poor Dennis, still traumatized...

If only he'd read the sign with the prices, he could have made the play on his own, and maybe even eventually gotten some ice-cream, instead of the no ice-cream blues.

