

# **The Sacred Rules of the Drive-Thru**

by Kalin - Friday, March 04, 2011

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## **Part 1: Christmas Day**

One Christmas Day, around 2001 or so, I was all by myself since my family had celebrated the day before and all my friends were off opening presents. I was hungry. I had no food in my kitchen and no car, so I grabbed my bike and rode downtown toward The Ranch Room, one of Bellingham's few 24 hour restaurants.

Twenty minutes later I found myself at the front door of the restaurant, staring at the unfamiliar 'Closed' sign that they only brought out on special occasions.

Okay, I thought. Maybe there's another restaurant around here that's serving a nice, fancy, Christmas dinner. I was getting very hungry, and at this point, didn't care if I needed to blow 20 or 30 bucks on a five-course dinner. I rode around downtown for forty minutes or so, checking every restaurant I could think of, praying one would have a Christmas Day special.

Nothing.

Fine. At least Taco Bell should be open. It was a half hour ride away, but I didn't have much choice. I set out for the shopping center in the distance, but when I arrived there, alas, The Bell was all dark.

However, next door was a beacon of hope, A Jack In The Box with a giant "Drive-Thru Open" sign. I gave my thanks to the creator (I was not an atheist at this time) and rode over.

The sensors didn't recognize me when I pulled up to the menu and intercom, so I rode all the way forward to the pick-up window.

Then my heart sank as I saw the big sign. "Pedestrians and guests on bicycles will not be served." But of course, as I read it, it said, "We don't think you deserve respect as a human being if you don't own a car." No doubt a conspiracy by the oil companies.

But I prayed they would make an exception on Christmas, so I knocked on the window. As I waited, I thought about what I would do if they refused. If I couldn't get food now, I wasn't going to be able to eat until the 26th. My only choice would be to simply walk in the back door of Jack In The Box and start making my own food, making sure to cook rapidly enough that I could get a few bites before the police came to haul me away. It would be worth it. I was just that hungry, and it was still early enough that I'd still get a full meal in jail. In the end I wouldn't feel bad, protesting a discriminatory law. Simply because I don't have a car doesn't mean I'm a second-class citizen. It would be a good story to tell, too, an interesting character builder.

A young woman came and opened the window.

"Hi," I said, and began spitting out my order of tacos, one dollar chicken sandwiches and the like, hoping I could just push past the moment where she felt uncomfortable about breaking the rules. She glanced at my bicycle, but punched the order into the computer and took my money. She closed the window and I breathed a sigh of relief, thanking God once again.

A minute later the woman returned and opened the window. "Um..." she said. "Can I ask a favor? Could you pick up your bike and put it up on the sidewalk and just stand over there and don't look like you're ordering food from me? I'm technically not supposed to serve bicycles."

## **Part 2: Drunk Drivers**

Nearly a decade later it was about 2:00 AM on a Tuesday night and I was hungry. I wanted to go to Taco Bell, but this time, I had a car. I would have preferred to walk, of course, but knew about their no pedestrian rule, so I grudgingly hopped into the old automobile.

As I pulled into the drive-thru two young men jumped out of the bushes. One of them lept in front of my vehicle, forcing me to hit the brakes. He staggered, slapping his hands on my hood for stability. He came around to my window, leaning dramatically left and right, keeping a hand on my car.

"Hey, Dude!" he said. "Can I ask you a favor? Me and my buddy just want to get some tacos." He pointed to his friend standing to the side, swaying back and forth. "This ass-hole won't let us buy tacos 'cause we don't have a car. We can get tacos if we're drunk as fuck behind the wheel but for some reason we can't if we're on foot."

"Sure," I said. "No problem. What do you need?"

"Two bean burritos and four tacos. Simple simple. Two bean burritos and four tacos." He handed me a small wad of bills. "Dude, thanks so much for this. I swear to God, we've been waiting here like forty minutes."

I put in our order and pulled ahead. The two guys stood around outside and chatted.

"My car is right there on the other side of that fence." The first man pointed. "At first we ordered from this guy and he said he'd give us our food, then he came back and refused to take our money, said he'd changed his mind. Got all scared about losing his job for serving a couple pedestrians. I told him I was drunk as fuck and that I'd drive here if I had to and he told me to go for it. It's okay for him to serve a drunk driver. Can you believe that? I was screaming at the guy, 'I'm gonna kill someone! I can barely walk and you want me to fucking drive here just because of some stupid insurance bullshit?' But no, he called my bluff."

"Either he called your bluff or he just didn't give a shit," said the other. "He just cares about his own job."

"There was a lady in a van here like twenty minutes ago, and she refused to help us too," said the first

guy.

"You scared the shit out of her, Dude!"

"Yeah, she was all like 'aaaaahhh get away! Get away, freak!' And I'm like 'Please Bitch! I just want a fucking burrito! Please God!' There's hot tacos and burritos right there inside that building and I can't have any just 'cause I don't want to drink and drive. She threw my money back at me 'cause she didn't want to break the goddamn sacred rules of the Drive-thru."

"Yeah," I said. "It's amazing how often you see rules and regulations substituted for logic and common sense."

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Here's my blog post I wrote about this, [Taco Bell Promotes Drunk Drunk Driving](#).

And here's my blog post in response to Renee's comment below: [Dangerous Drive-Thrus and Laws Justifying Laws](#).

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