

Well I just had one of the worst experiences of my life. I just got home from buying a pair of shoes.

It started off easy enough. I got a check in the mail from an editor who actually paid me for one of my stories. As I often do with surprise money like that, I decided I would splurge a little and buy something just for me. I really needed a pair of tennis shoes, so I headed off to the mall to pamper my feet.

Let me start by saying I am 100% male when it comes to shopping. I don't like it. I like to go into a store, grab some proximity of what I need, pay for it and head out the door. I'm a no frills shopper. Browsing has no place in my vocabulary. And I especially detest walking into a store and being greeted by a bunch of commission-hungry salespeople. I almost never buy anything at those stores.

So here I am walking into the mall with an excellent game plan. 15 minutes to grab a pair of tennis shoes, 30 minutes to browse through my favorite book store, and another 30 minutes at the food garden packing away the sinful dogs with mayo, mustard, relish and plenty of onions.

I slip into the first sporting store thinking that they might have just what I need, being that their walls were decked with a various array of tennis shoes. As I walked in, this kid who looked like an NBA ref a few years shy of puberty greets me with a perky smile and, "Can I help you, sir?"

I quickly brush the kid off with a confident " Naw, I just need to pick up a pair of tennis shoes."

"Great" says the perky punkster, not realizing that he is wasting his energy on a guy with little appetite for salesmanship, "What kind do you need?"

Rule number one when shopping is that you never let a salesperson know that you have no idea of what you are looking for, or what he is talking about.

"White" I say... he laughs.

"Well what do you do?"... he inquires... I pause

"I'm a writer"... he laughs again.

"No, what do you need the shoes for?"... he smiles... I pause.

"My feet?" I suggest... he laughs.

“That’s funny... I mean what do you need them for... basketball?... racquetball?... aerobics?... tennis?... jogging?...”

I smile with painful hesitation, “Walking?”

“Oh, so you’re a walker? So how long you been walking, mister?”

“Well,” I say through my grinding teeth, “From what I’ve been told, since I was around nine months old.”

He laughs out loud... I’m ready to hit the bookstore.

“Well you’re in luck today because all the walking shoes over there with the red tag are on special for ya!”

Well I’m about ready to skip the shoes and head straight for the super dog as I fumble through the walking shoes looking for a red tag.

I mention to the young lad that they all seem awfully heavy and ask if he has just a plain pair of white tennis shoes?

“Well sir, those give you great support and are a great buy this week at only \$85.00!” Was the last thing I heard before “Someone call 911!”

We seem to have lost touch with the simple things in life. Why can’t someone walk into a store and buy a simple pair of shoes for just kicking around the house? Why does a pair of tennis shoes have to come with so much technological advancement that instead of comfort, you feel like your walking around in cinder blocks?

I MIGHT spend \$85 bucks for a pair of shoes to go with my tux if they ever invite me to the Grammy Awards. But I will NEVER pay \$85 bucks for a pair of tennis shoes to get me from my computer to the couch with.

So I bought a book for 20 bucks, thinking I could curl up on the couch and read all the wonderful stories barefoot. Somebody stop the madness!

Just A Thought