

## A brief visit to the Low Countries or *L'Épopée des Quatre-Heures (aux Pays-Bas)*

### To Costco. Ho!

A lack of groceries and an uneventful ride, by bus and bicycle, brought me to Costco in Marina del Rey today (7-28-2021).

### Opening Scene

Found a self-propelled cart to move me thorough my shopping expedition due to my hip problem. (These carts, much like the bump cars I used to enjoy riding at fairs when I was a kid, nowadays don't make the same satisfying "Bump" when hit, though).

### The Plot Thickens

In the checkout line, the customer ahead of me, sounding like a general issue tub-thumper, bantered awhile with the cashier. Until, that is, he uttered one word: "Veteran." For some reason, the poor Costco employee immediately stiffened, practically coming to attention. When it was my turn to pay, he (the cashier) proceeded to mount my electric cart ostensibly, he said, to guide it to its proper place, taking care, all the while, to make contact with my shoulder with his upper hip or groin as he was standing on the cart while I remained seated. After the dismount, ringing up my groceries, he, twice, put his hand on my shoulder at which point I, all ~~passion~~ patience spent, quietly let him know I did not like being touched. Needing to repeat myself as he apparently had not heard me the first time. All the while, having to caution the young woman placing my groceries back in the electric cart, that the heavier items did NOT belong on top of the eggs.

*C'est ce qu'il faut? Che schifo!*

### Some particulars

Date: 07/27/2021

Time: 15:01

Operator #: 67

Name: Gary L

Transaction ID #: 120800001455....

Physical description: Male. Negro. Suspect. Approx. 40 y.o. Tallish. Medium build.

Summary: Yet another sample (among so, so many) of the ritual humiliation of the powerless by the powerless.

### Aftermath

Afterwards, back outside the store was accosted by a young man seeming perhaps "at loose ends." As I was transferring my groceries to the bike I had ridden to the store, he, after asking if I was done, presumably with the electric cart, insisted twice in wondering if I was through. I began replying in mock "Spanglish," protesting that while I could not understand Spanish (though Hispanic, he spoke perfect English), I did speak "Spanglish." After a further, brief, exchange, he left. Having loaded my groceries and preparing to ride off, I then found one of my tires was flat.

### Dénouement

Braving the elements (the heat, my flat tire and the occasional, uncomprehending, bus driver), I eventually made my way home, slowly. Partly late, partly distracted, partly tired; when I reached home, I thus missed a video appointment with a therapist later that day.

### Connection

As to the initial reference to the "Low Countries," (*les Pays-Bas*) during my outing, I managed to score a piece of Gouda cheese, aged 20 months. Direct from Holland. It said on the label: "Nutty ~~yet~~ and Robust."

(signed)

*Bergie* "Wag 'n Bietjie" Hawkins (Appropriate, ¿Que No?)

P.S.

Tonton and assorted impedimenta being so thick on the ground nowadays (whether in stores, on the bus or, indeed, in my neighborhood, that "*Je ne sais plus a quel sein me vouer.*" (Get it ?) A lousy pun, wot?