

Black Friday at the Pepper Spray Shoppe

by
Pete Barry

MARIGOLD stands at the counter, holding a can of pepper spray.

MARIGOLD

Ready? Who's got the door? Awesome. We're open in six, five, four, three, two, one, LET 'EM IN.

Welcome, folks! Come on in! No pushing! No pushing! Plenty for everyone! DON'T HOG THE BASKETS! If everyone can maintain an orderly disposition, this will go smoothly! We have plenty of personal safety products to go around.

Yes? Yes, ma'am, those are all pepper spray.

(She indicates the different sections of the store, shouting to all patrons.)

Pepper spray, rape whistles, tear gas, mustard gas, gas masks, survivalist, party supplies, batons and riot gear! We also have bottled water and Coke. Bathrooms are in the rear.

Yes sir? That *is* a doorbuster, congratulations! You got one! Very good choice. Twenty-three forty-nine. This is very popular with the kids. Enjoy!

Hello ma'am! That's seven-fifty. You know those rape whistles are two for one today. I happen to have an extra. Sure! Give to a friend who you think might need it! You know, the ones who dress like...I'm sure you'll know who to give it to. Very good, have a nice day!

That's a beauty. Thirty-five sixty. This is a classic, it's the same brand they used at UC Davis. Very effective, you should check it out on YouTube. Have a nice day!

Yes sir. Let me ring this up. That's right! Well last year was a very good year for us. Oh, yes, it seemed like everybody was spraying everybody else. I don't think we really marketed to the southern states like we could have. Well. What do I know, I'm just a lowly clerk. Thank you! Have a nice day!

HEY BUSTER! Don't even think about walking out with that! Dave? Yeah, escort Mister Large Item in Tight Pants to the back room. You don't fuck with a personal security goods store, my friend.

Hello! Can you what? No, I'm sorry, we're a personal security store. You wouldn't want to put this pepper on your food. Yes, I think you want Bed Bath and Beyond. That's right next door. OK, OK, bye-bye.

Hello! Yes, this is very nice. For your wife? Ohhhhhh. Very sweet.

Well, yes, it's actually the same pepper you put in food. It's very safe, I don't understand why people get so reh-reh-reh about it. Look, we sell pepper, mustard, we're just like Trader Joe's. You know, I was eating an animal cracker the other day, I looked at the ingredients, you know what's in Animal Crackers? Mace. I'm not joking. Buy some Animal Crackers, you'll see.

NOT EVERYBODY AT ONCE! NO CLIMBING THE DISPLAYS!

No, I wouldn't just pepper spray a chicken, but you could. I just think it would be a waste of a good dispenser.

No, I wouldn't. Actually, I don't even eat chicken. I'm a strict vegan.

I used to, but then one day I made a whole roaster chicken, in a stock pot, with vegetables all around, and I pulled it out, and by some strange chance the chicken had caught a whole carrot right underneath its wing, just tucked up in there. It looked like a mother keeping a little baby under its wing. Well, I won't lie, I got a little teary over that poor chicken, so I threw it away and never looked back. I've been a vegan ever since. It's tough but it really increases your energy levels.

GET THE FUCK OFF THAT.

I know, it's a madhouse. This is our busiest day of the year.

What? Mace is nutmeg? I bet it is, pepper in pepper spray, nutmeg in mace. You see?

Oh, nutmeg mace is different from *mace* mace. Hm. Well, I still bet you could eat it.

WHAT? WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? DO YOU CLIMB DISPLAYS IN OTHER STORES?

WAIT WAIT WAIT! EVERYBODY BACK OFF!

(She begins spraying the crowd with her canister.)

YEAH, HOW'S ABOUT THAT YOU SICK ANIMALS! WELCOME BACK TO CIVILIZATION! STINGS, HUH? THAT'S RIGHT. YOU WALK RIGHT OUT THAT DOOR AND COME BACK WHEN YOU'RE READY TO STOP SHOVING PEOPLE. CHECK OUT TARGET UNTIL YOU CAN BEHAVE YOURSELF.

Well! That was quite a demonstration, wasn't it?

We sell these for forty-three dollars apiece -

Yes, yes, looks like the rush is dying down already. It's fast in here, we get 'em in and out. Busiest day of the year, you know?

Tomorrow? Oh, no, we're not open tomorrow. Everybody gets their pepper spray today to *get ready* for tomorrow.

No, there's no Black Friday at the Pepper Spray Shoppe.

Well thank you!

Very good! Have a nice day! Happy Thanksgiving!

Next, please?

Black out.