

WALMART RECEIPT

by

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FADE IN:

INT. WALMART CUSTOMER SERVICE - DAY

An ASSOCIATE, 18, finishes up a return for an elderly man. He thanks her, turns and leaves. She looks up at the next customer.

DALE, 20, pulls items out of his shopping cart. A thin, muscled construction worker with a week's worth of beard, wearing a cutoff shirt that reveals all of his arm tattoos. He handles every one of the purchases with contempt before shoving them on the counter. They come out in this order:

An 8 pack of paper towels
A roll of plain wrapping paper
A baby monitor new in package
Batteries for it
A one pound bunch of bananas

The man hesitates with the bananas. He snatches them back and breaks one off before tossing the rest into the open cart seat.

DALE

Not these.

He peels the banana, chomps into it and goes for one more item in the cart. A shiny silver scooter.

He lifts it out roughly and hands it across the counter into the associate's outstretched arms.

DALE

Woman thinks I'm made of money.
Goddamn Pampers bleeding me dry.
You know what Pampers cost now?

She shakes her head no.

DALE (CONT'D)

You know what a *baby* costs now?
A goddamn baby? A little kid
who weighs no more than my wife's
little mutt who costs less to
feed in a freaking year than her
bundle from heaven sucks and shits
in a *month*?

The associate stares at Dale open-mouthed.

DALE (CONT'D)
I'll let you guess.

After an awkward beat:

ASSOCIATE
Do you have a receipt?

The young man reaches into his shirt pocket and hands over the receipt.

MEGGIE (O.S.)
Dale?

Dale screws up his face.

DALE
Shit.

He swings around.

His young wife MEGGIE, 20, stands there with the hurt, tear-filled eyes of a wounded deer. She holds a six month old baby girl as pretty as her mother. The baby stares at him too, smiling when she recognizes her daddy. She reaches out with her tiny arms.

Dale turns back to the counter. The associate scans the items one by one. He grips the counter with both hands.

DALE
I told you to stay home, Meggie.

MEGGIE
Dale -- we need that stuff. Please.
Everything I bought, it's important.

Dale swings angrily back around.

DALE
A sixty dollar scooter? Is she gonna ride it? She can't even goddamn walk!

MEGGIE

It's for Tyrone. For Christmas.

DALE

Who the hell is Tyrone?

MEGGIE

(annoyed)

Your nephew, Dale! My sister's kid! She's living hand to mouth since --

DALE

And we're not? *And we're not?*
Listen -- I work fifty hours a week and it means nothing to you -- or to this kid! Busting my ass for what? FOR WHAT!

MEGGIE

(tearful)

For us! I thought it was for us!

DALE

There ain't gonna be no us -- because I'll be dead!

Their baby girl starts bawling. Meg soothes her.

MEGGIE

You're making her cry!

DALE

You are, by coming here! What's with the wrapping paper? And a whole eight pack of Bounties? And a freaking *two hundred dollar* baby monitor? You're bleeding us dry!

MEGGIE

I wanted it for the bedroom.
I can't always hear Cassie.

DALE

What do you mean, you can't always hear her? Nighttime's quiet!

MEGGIE

You snore, Dale! You snore LOUD.
Look, I was gonna pay it off with
Ebay stuff.

DALE

But two hundred *dollars*?

MEGGIE

It cost one sixty nine! With a
forty dollar mail-in rebate!
How's that?

DALE

Not much better!
(a beat)
Okay, pretty darn good. And
whadduya mean I snore? You never
told me!

MEGGIE

There's a LOT I never told you,
you asshole!

Dale's mouth drops open. The associate stops in mid-scan.
All the other associates look up, shocked. Customers on line
stare, wondering what Dale will do next.

MEGGIE (CONT'D)

And the wrapping paper? Wanna
guess what that's for, cementhead?
Go ahead, guess!

Almost instantly it dawns on Dale. Guilt softens his stance.
He's in hot water now, but there's still fight in him.

DALE

My friggin' birthday is two months
away, Meg!

MEGGIE

And I remembered! I remembered you
don't like fancy gift wrap! 'Put it
in a plain brown wrapper, like a
goddamn sex tape'. Remember you
said that?

Associates look at each other and grin. Customers snicker.

MEGGIE

Guess not! You can't even remember you have a nephew! He looks up to you! You know that? No! Tyrone's got no father now!

DALE

Yeah well, maybe if your sister put out more...

Meggie steps up to Dale and wallops him across the face with her open hand. She glowers at him. Their baby girl's gone dead quiet, her face an uh-oh.

MEGGIE

You -- don't know -- *the first thing about a woman!*

DALE

Yeah well, I know --

MEGGIE

What? What, Romeo? Gonna tell everybody? You love your frigging car more than me and our little girl! You spend half of our Sundays in the garage making love to your other wife! What do you think the paper towels are for, you idiot! You go through five rolls a week out there!

Dale stares back at his wife. A touch of regret starts to creep over him. He looks down.

DALE

Meggie. I'm sorry.

MEGGIE

You think you're the only one?

Meggie starts to sob. Her emotions are rollercoastering.

Dale goes to hug her. She shrinks back. He tries again. It's awkward as hell. Slowly she melts. They embrace.

Everyone cheers.

Dale turns to his associate.

DALE

Forget it.

The associate hands the items back to Dale one by one. He puts them back in the cart. The scooter comes last. Dale looks it over. He nods in approval.

DALE

Nice.

MEGGIE

You're damn right. On clearance, too.

DALE

Way to go, Meggie.

MEGGIE

(sarcastically)

Way to go, Meggie. Will you hurry up? Cassie just pooped her pants, and I'm hungry as hell!

As they leave customer service, their conversation fading...

DALE

Hey -- you wanna share a footlong?

MEGGIE

Did I just say I'm starved? Get your own!

DALE

Okay, okay! Why you so hungry all the time?

FADE OUT.