

We Both Know This Coffee Shop Has a Bathroom

And you're going to let me use it.

ELI BURNSTEIN

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No bathroom, huh? Interesting. I didn't realize that baristas didn't have kidneys. That they could just knock back cortados all day and, what, sweat it out? I'd love to know how you do it. Can you teach me?

And while you're at it, can you put me in touch with the architects, engineers, and developers responsible for this wonder of a coffee shop? I'm sure they'd love to be informed that at no point between the design, construction, and safety inspection of this 750 square foot commercial unit did it occur to them to install plumbing.

Why must we play these games, you and I? Why must we dance around the fact that this coffee shop does, indeed, *must* have a bathroom. Legally, structurally, morally, biologically. Or are you going to tell me that that door marked "private" isn't exactly what I think it is?

Ah! So you *do* have a bathroom: it's just for employees only. So you aren't bladderless wonders after all—you're just jerks, laughing it up in your VIP piss lounge while the rest of us load up on diuretics and take to the streets.

Oh! It's "policy," is it? Why didn't you say so! All you had to do was drop the magical p-word and *boom!* My UTI magically disappears. As it happens I have a policy of my own, which is that when I am denied access to a perfectly good toilet, I go insane. Would you like me to activate the policy?

For you see, Gene—may I call you Gene?—a \$5 latte isn't just a \$5 latte. On the contrary, title to such a purchase comes with a host of associated rights and privileges. From the right to sit down at your establishment, to the right to add milk and sugar, to... what was the third one? Oh yeah, *the right to use your motherfucking bathroom.*

And if, as your youthfully glazed-over eyes suggest, you aren't the mastermind behind this feeble policy but are merely its enforcer, it falls to me to remind you of another ill-fated group who were "just following orders." You're the bathroom police, is what I'm saying. A john cop. A lavatory narc.

"The bar down the street has one I can use," you say? What a coincidence! So does my home, my office, and every single restaurant, diner, and truck stop I've been to in my entire life. All the more reason why this café, too, should make good on the social contract and hook a pisser up.

What's this? You're giving in? It's a miracle. A revelation. A sign that not all is lost in this cruel and fucked-up world... Oh, you have to give me that giant wooden key fob? I'm not touching that, it looks disgusting.