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KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)
This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.

Recently I witnessed a most disturbing incident! I was standing in line at a local store waiting to check out. A small boy, about 8 or 9 years old was in the cue in front of me. As he approached the check out clerk, I heard a voice over my shoulder coming from the display aisles of the store. The voice shouted, "Did you get your candy?" The boy in front of me shouted back, " Yes, I'm waiting to pay." The young man pulled from his pocket a folded dollar bill wrapped around two quarters. The boy then took a package of tic tacs from the shelf and laid the candy and the folded dollar on the counter. The voice over my shoulder again yelled out, " Are you finished paying?" The boy responded, "No!"

The clerk finished the transaction, and handled the boy a receipt, and 1 penny change for the \$1.49 tic tacs. The boy yelled out, "I'm done Dad." With that comment he turned to walk out the nearby front door of the store. In an instant, I saw a young man in his mid twenties with a skate board in hand and a blond-headed baby girl in a child's back pack join the boy and rush to the store's door. The instant the party crossed the store's alarmed threshold. Every alarm in the place went off. The store manager rushed to the scene and confronted the young man with the baby in the back pack. The little boy stated over and over....."Here's my receipt, Here's my receipt." The dad said he didn't have anything, but the security alarm kept sounding.

The next thing I saw turned my stomach. The boy's dad took off running down the block. The blond-headed baby bouncing in the back pack all the way down the street. The little boy was left at the store entrance crying, and still holding the tic tacs, the receipt, and the penny change out to the store manager.

The nearby clerk later told me that this ploy was common place for shop lifters. She also told me that she had seen the family come in the store and there was also a mom. Sure enough, the young boy stated that his mother was in the back of the store in the rest room. He immediately ran back into the store and headed back to the rest room calling out loudly for his mother.

I stayed in the store for a couple of minutes while the manager and the clerk sorted things out with calls to the police. As I stood there, I couldn't help and wonder about what kind of parents would use their children in a shop lifting scheme, and then run off and leave the children when the plot was uncovered.

When I was a boy, I tried shop lifting in a store one time. I didn't get caught by the store staff, I got discovered by my dad. He accompanied my back to the store manager, where I confessed what I had done. I spent the next two weeks sweeping the floor of that store at closing time. I wonder if the boy in the local store will ever get an accountability lesson from his parents?

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