



Ned Hickson

'Bathroom rage' could soon clog our court system

Several years ago I came up with an idea while standing in line for the rest room, which, in this case, was actually a row of six portable toilets set up to meet the needs of approximately 8,000 men, women and children, each of whom had apparently consumed two or more 128-ounce Big Gulps in the previous 20 minutes.

They say necessity is the mother of invention. Which is why, as I stood waiting with my legs crossed, I had a revolu-

tionary idea I call the "Rodeo Commode."

Like other commodes, it provides users with a private and sanitary environment in which to complete their bodily functions. However, unlike ordinary commodes, the "Rodeo Commode" allows a person just eight seconds before the doors fly open and, finished or not, they are bucked out of the stall by a hydraulic system similar to a mechanical bull — including, if necessary, spinning a full 360 degrees in order to dislodge even the most experienced riders in the "Rodeo Commode" circuit.

Unfortunately, just like my idea for an all-commercial

cable channel (allowing viewers to tune in and leave the room as often as they like without worrying if they missed anything), the "Rodeo Commode" was met with skepticism by my list of potential investors — i.e., several plumbers I know who have daily contact with pipe dope.

As it turns out, I was simply ahead of my time. I know this because of a new social phenomenon experts are calling "bathroom rage," wherein, much like "road rage," a confrontation between two strangers quickly escalates into a potentially dangerous situation.

In the restroom.

The big difference here is that you won't be traveling in excess of 60 mph while sitting on a commode. And if you are, you have a right to be angry. Especially if someone cuts you off.

According to the New Haven Register in Stratford, Conn., police charged Andres Diaz and Joseph Augusto with breach of peace following a confrontation in a Burger King restroom that started when Diaz apparently "took too long."

Augusto, who was waiting to use the commode, was enraged when Diaz emerged from the stall with a copy of "War and Peace."

Okay, I made that last part

up. But the two men did get into a fight over how long Diaz was in the bathroom after Augusto confronted him about it. That's when, according to the police report, "The two men allegedly bumped chests, then chased each other around the restaurant with their weapons — Augusto with a small pocket knife, and Diaz brandishing a Burger King straw dispenser."

The restaurant chain refused to comment on the incident other than to say it was "unfortunate." Following the advice of its lawyers, Burger King has now adopted a strict new policy of making straws "only available on request."

This, my friends, is "bathroom rage" rearing its ugly head and, in a matter of speaking, slurping out of society's collective soda cup. What if Diaz had grabbed a toilet paper dispenser instead?

My point is we could end this madness right now, before some unfortunate teenager is hired to hand out allotted squares of bath tissue.

With the help of a small investment in my "Rodeo Commode," there's no need for us to take "bathroom rage" sitting down.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com

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