



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

Taco Bell Blues

Taco Bell Blues¹

December 15, 2014

I am sitting in a nearly empty Taco Bell cafe, where I am sipping a Diet Coke but eating nothing. I favor Taco Bell over other taco cafes, so not eating its tacos is a bit of a let-down.

Just down the street, dozens of folks have queued up at the Panda Express for their daily fast food fix, ordering non-onion dishes. At a local steakhouse, liver and onions are off the menu. A few blocks from the steakhouse, Del Taco seems to be attracting a few hearty souls, who may not be aware that the ingredients of a taco are pretty much the same whether the delicacy comes from Taco Bell, Del Taco, or Taco John's.

Recently, health officials have taken onions off the list of suspects contributing to *mal tacos* but now suspect lettuce is the culprit. Finding the guilty ingredient is not easy, because a taco's condiments inside the corn shell are mixed-up to begin with. And they are mixed-up even more once inside our stomachs.

I was curious to learn how health experts could identify lettuce as the problem. Why not meat? Say, meat from Canada? Or food from Mexico? Especially food from Mexico. Have you ever heard of Canadian Mounted Police Revenge? I thought not. How about Montezuma's Revenge? There you go.

Anyway, the news media explained the evidence was pointing toward lettuce because it was the item the victims most reported eating.² A statistical solution! Plus Taco Bell's president said cheese was unlikely because it was pasteurized, and meat was also unlikely because of the way in which it was prepared: The taco sauce on the meat kills germs.

If taco sauce kills germs on the meat, imagine what it kills as it cascades around your mouth, down your esophagus, stomach, colon, etc. Sore-ass takes on a new meaning.

The verse that knocked onions is now out-of-date. So, let's do an update:

*E. Coli is nature's gel,
it's even better than calomel.
When you eat your lettuce,
You'll be left feeling helpless,
It'll make your innards pale!*

It's just starting. Frankenfood is on the bandwagon along with assorted side effects. The food industry continues to invent new ways to doctor food, to modify fruit and vegetable genes. They spray food with chemicals that germs have adapted to resist. Before long, the Taco Bell scare will be thought of as noise on the tainted food spectrum. It will never end:

*If you've had tacos at Taco Bell,
then I suggest you try to expel:
those fast food goodies, those wonderful treats,
the peppers, tomatoes, and even the meat.
And while you are at it, it would be rather swell,
if you also can manage to get rid of the shell.^{Note}*

¹ The Taco Bell symbol on the cover of this report is a registered trademark of Taco Bell.

² *The Coeur d' Alene Press*. December 14, 2006, A6.

Note This is an upcoming alert, because a taco shell is often made from corn. So, stay tuned for a corn alert. We will get ahead of the power curve, with two lines to a limerick. I welcome your adding the next lines:

*E. Coli is nature's scorn,
for that nice yellow veggie called corn.*