"Gee, ma'am. Are you sure about that?" they asked.

I put on my biggest, brightest Dallas Cowboys cheerleader smile and said, "No, I'm positive. The closest I've ever come to Satanism is watching Geraldo."

"Hmmm. Interesting. See, we was just wondering why it is you have the lord of darkness on your chest there."

I was this close to slapping one of them and causing a scene—then I stopped and noticed the shirt I happened to be wearing that day. Sure enough, it had a picture of a small, devilish-looking creature that has for some time now been associated with a certain operating system. In this particular representation, the creature was wearing sneakers.

They continued: "See, ma'am, we don't exactly appreciate it when people show off pictures of the devil. Especially when he's lookin' so friendly."

These idiots sounded terrifyingly serious.

Me: "Oh, well, see, this isn't really the devil, it's just, well, it's sort of a mascot.

Native: "And what kind of football team has the devil as a mascot?"

Me: "Oh, it's not a team. It's an operating—uh, a kind of computer."

I figured that an ATM machine was about as much technology as these guys could handle, and I knew that if I so much as uttered the word "UNIX" I would only make things worse.

Native: "Where does this satanical computer come from?"

Me: "California. And there's nothing satanical about it really."

Somewhere along the line here, the waitress noticed my predicament—but these guys probably outweighed her by 600 pounds, so all she did was look at me sympathetically and run off into the kitchen.

Native: "Ma'am, I think you're lying. And we'd appreciate it if you'd leave the premises now."

Fortunately, the waitress returned that very instant with my order, and they agreed that it would be okay for me to actually pay for my food before I left. While I was at the cash register, they amused themselves by talking to each other.

Native #1: "Do you think the police know about these devil computers?"

Native #2: "If they come from California, then the FBI oughta know about 'em."

They escorted me to the door. I tried one last time: "You're really blowing this all out of proportion. A lot of people use this 'kind of computers.' Universities, researchers, businesses. They're actually very useful."

Big, big, *big* mistake. I should have guessed at what came next.

Native: "Does the government use these devil computers?"

Me: "Yes."

Another *big* boo-boo.

Native: "And does the government pay for 'em? With our tax dollars?"