I really wasn't quite sure what was going on when I discovered my husband Jason shifting through a mountain of sale papers.

Wednesday's edition of The Yazoo Herald was stuffed with an assortment of inserts highlighting the best after Thanksgiving Day sales or "Black Friday" deals as many of us call it.

Apparently, Jason was clueless about this.

"Look at all these deals," he said, pointing to an air hockey table. "This place is practically giving the stuff away."

Like a child at Christmas, I had to listen to Jason "ohhhh" and "ahhhh" over everything from a portable pool table to a Polo shirt to flat screen television.

Patting him on his back, I tried to explain to him the significance of Black Friday.

"Now, do you see why I get up so early," I asked. "This is what Black Friday is all about. You can get some really good deals, but you have to battle the crowd and have a game plan."

Black Friday has been a part of my life ever since my earliest memory. It was a day of excitement, frustration. It was every emotion you could think of, all wrapped up in one day with a giant bow on top.

My Maw Maw was the best Black Friday shopper in three counties.

She would study and mark all the sale papers the night before. She reminded me of an Army general, plotting her plan of attack for a very important battle.

Then we would wake up at 2 a.m., load the Ford station wagon up and head out.

Poor Paw Paw wanted to tag along one year but Maw Maw refused. Paw Paw was restricted to a wheelchair, and Maw Maw felt it "would slow things down."

I felt bad for Paw Paw that day, but after I told him about the fight that broke out between two women over a Cabbage Patch doll, he was glad he stayed home.

The station wagon would come into the mall parking lot on two wheels as my face was shoved against the glass.

I was dragged to every store from Sears to McRae's (now known as Belk) to Dillards to Toys R Us to Wal-Mart. I can remember the box of Cracker Jacks they would give you at McRae's.

I thought I would settle in for a delicious snack of caramel popcorn only to have Maw Maw snatch the box out of my hand.

"You gotta dump it," she said, throwing the popcorn into a huge trash can the store provided. "There might be the diamond ring inside."

For hours, I was shoved into glass doors, pushed down crowded aisles. One time, my cousin and I were instructed to sit atop a giant stuffed polar bear to prevent any other shopper grabbing it before Maw Maw got to it.

And at the end of the day, we returned home with a station wagon full of gifts and toys.
My mother was the same way. She even got up at midnight one night to purchase the next craze in technology at one of those giant super centers.
I have even camped with Momma outside a store before.
I am proud to say that I am carrying on the tradition of the Black Friday madness.
I haven't camped outside a store yet or tried to get to those midnight sales. But I do wake up at 4 a.m., fueled with coffee and my plastic card.
And judging by Jason's excitement over the sale papers, I probably could have a helper the night before as I route my plan of attack.
But Jason must stay at home when it gets down to it.
Black Friday can be a chaotic time with both laughter and tears.
It's no place for rookies.