

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Gone Country

Once, I was an Almost Criminal

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The Bandera Prophet

The other day, I happened by a conversation two women were having about the wild things they did when they were younger. I chimed right in and said, “If there had been Facebook back then, I would still be in jail.”

I almost became an “Official Juvenile Delinquent” in eighth grade. If you remember, your best mode of transportation at that age was your trusty bicycle. I had traded up through the years (via my parents’ birthday presents) to a nice bike with those tall handlebars because they were cool. Evidently Harley Drivers never moved on from that stage. Anyway, my bike had some issues, so Joe the Pro took it to the local bike shop (remember those?) that was half a mile away and they were happy to fix it. When it was done, my best friend and I walked up to the strip center to pick it up and ride it back to my house. Hooray! I was getting my freedom back.

So, on the way home, I pedaled my bike, and she sat on the handlebars so we could get back together. Hey, Pendleton, think about that as a new exercise experience...

Anyway, we were riding back on the sidewalk (not Wild Street Girls) when Officer Friendly pulled us over, sirens blaring. Other than when your eighth-grade boyfriend breaks up with you, police sirens are the most terrifying thing in the world.

Officer Friendly issued me a ticket for “Riding Double on a Bike.” Oh, the horror! What a desperate outlaw I had become. That wouldn’t even come close to a Tik Tok challenge today.

I'm pretty sure I cried while we walked my bike the rest of the way home.

But then I had to present my official ticket to my parents to let them know I was nothing but a Juvenile Delinquent. They acted very stern but I'm sure I heard laughter from their bedroom that night.

And the citation demanded that I show up a couple of weeks later in Juvenile Court to be sentenced by my peers. The Juvenile Court was being run by High School boys who I assume all wanted to be judges one day. I was terrified and wore my best dress, accompanied by my "not too happy" Mother. Actually, I think she was mad because Officer Friendly was an idiot for giving a ticket to a preteen.

While we sat in the crowded courtroom and waited our turn to get seen by the "judge" who still didn't have facial hair, it just so happened that the High School boy sitting to me was actually a real Juvenile Delinquent because he reached over and put his hand on my thigh. I jumped up and screamed at the top of my lungs, while my mother started yelling that her daughter was being assaulted.

We were immediately ushered out of the courtroom and placed in front of a real judge who simply said, "In light of these circumstances, you are free to go and just know this will never be on your daughter's record. So sorry for the confusion."

Dang, I wish they'd had cell phone videos back then. I might have been the first "bicycle influencer." At least I've never been incarcerated because, evidently, the thigh grabber scared me straight.