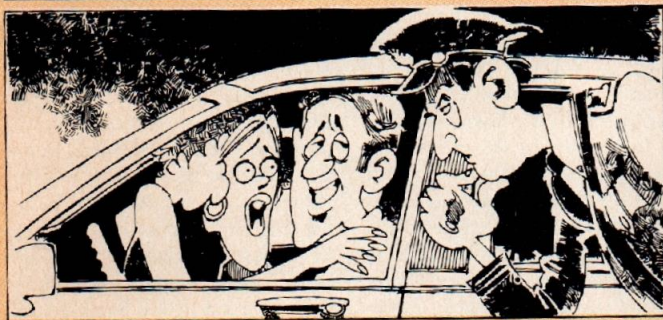


COP STORIES

Once in a while, the good guys win.



BY DON COULTER

• Whether his greeting is a cool "License and registration, please," a curious "Do you realize how fast you were going?" or a cordial "Assume the position, scumbag," you know you're in trouble again. The swift completion of your self-appointed rounds has just been interrupted by a pistol-packing tax collector, and you aren't going anywhere until he presents you with a bill for disservices rendered.

Or so it seems. Once in a while, though, with a quick wit, a plausible lie, or just plain luck, you can beat the system. A certain female on our staff, who is frequently the passenger of a certain male on our staff, who never violates the 55 until he leaves his driveway, has been known to cry: "Oh, Officer, it wasn't *his* fault at all! I've been bitching at him so much, it's a wonder he's been able to keep the car on the road! If you're going to give anyone a ticket, give it to *me*! I'm so sorry." Not all cops are gullible enough to swallow this routine, but it has saved our scofflaw more money, more points, and more court time than you might expect.

We invited you readers to submit your own favorite accounts of how you've escaped the clutches of the law. Appropriately, we even offered you a bribe: the ten miscreants whose stories appear below will each receive an "I Was a Ten Best Winner" T-shirt, a check for \$50, and one of our "rare automotive keepsakes" (some press-junkie junk that we found

buried in the bottoms of our drawers during our last biannual desk cleaning). We trust you'll find their stories amusing, uplifting—and in some cases worth remembering for the next time you're waylaid.

Fair Exchange

October 1973. I was working for a car dealer in Flourtown, Pennsylvania, and I had the onerous task of delivering a Ferrari Daytona (red, of course) to a dealer in Atlantic City. Beautiful fall day. After about ten miles on the Atlantic City Expressway, I succumbed.

Coasting down to about 30, I put the car into first and ran it to the redline in each gear. I was at 7700 in fifth (the speedometer was broken) when I passed under a bridge—on the far side of which was a New Jersey trooper, whom I saw out of the corner of my eye as I flashed by. By the time he got on the road, I was a good mile away. I slowed down to about 70, the speed limit in those days, but he did not pursue.

I found out why when I got to the toll plaza. When I pulled in, two cruisers blocked me, front and rear. Four troopers surrounded me, hands on guns,



and asked me to get out and put my hands on the roof, right now, please, sir. After thoroughly searching me and my trusty steed, they were visibly relaxed when they found no drugs, weapons, or other prohibited items. The sergeant asked me if I realized how fast I'd been going. I told him I figured I was doing at least 150 when I passed his colleague at the bridge. (I wasn't lying: 175 is at least 150.) He asked why I'd been going that fast. I pleaded irresistible temptation: a day like this, a road like this, a car like this. Then I asked him if he'd ever driven a Ferrari.

We stared at each other for about 30 seconds, the unspoken deal being, of course, that if I'd let him and his crew play with the Ferrari, they'd let me off. Finally, he smiled and said no, he hadn't. I inquired whether he might like to.

For the next half-hour, the four troopers took turns exploring the Daytona's performance envelope, while I chatted with them about cars and cops. Finally, I was sent on my way, Godspeed, with nothing but a subtle admonition to keep it down to about a hundred.

Needless to say, I complied.

Stephen A. Shalet
Elkins Park, Pennsylvania

Process of Elimination

This story involves a friend named Bob Sarver, of Wickliffe, Ohio. Since the early 1950s, Bob has been running about without a working colon and as a result wears a medium-sized pouch on his left hip, which is connected to his lower extremities with small hoses.

One day, as work was letting out, Bob noticed that the bag was about to overflow. He panicked and started to speed home. But before he could get to the county line, a Euclid police car pulled him over.

With a typical remark of "And where do you think the fire is, buddy?" the policeman approached. Bob opened his door, wheeled around in his



seat, pointed to the bag, and told the officer that its contents were about to spill over.

The policeman told Bob to get the hell out of there and empty that bag at home, as soon as possible.

John Kandrac, Jr.
Wickliffe, Ohio

Band on the Run

This incident took place in the winter of 1966 at our local university. The campus officer had opened the door to the dance hall for our band so we could bring in our instruments for the Friday-night dance.

Keen-eyed Officer James knew that we often sneaked booze in by hiding it in drum cases or in amplifiers. On this night he found our rum and made us turn it over. More in fun than in revenge, we plotted a scheme to get even.



Knowing that he was still inside, one of us yelled out that Officer James had left, so now we could talk freely. The "mission" we discussed was going to take place during our half-hour break, so all five of us would have to work quickly. We would have to exchange vehicles, too, we announced, since the pickup we had would only reveal the purpose of our "mis-

sion." All this time, Officer James remained hiding behind a curtain, quiet as a mouse.

Ten o'clock rolled around. The dance was busy, but Officer James managed to be at the rear exit as we left for our break. He eyed us suspiciously when we hopped into the pickup and drove away. In the rear-view mirror I could see him rushing to his police car and calling for backup.

At 10:30 we got back, in an automobile. Acting tired and out of breath, we went to enter the same way we had left. But Officer James and his assistant were waiting for us. They wanted to ask us some questions.

First, Officer James wanted to know if our overcoats might be burdened with liquor bottles. We showed him that they weren't. Second, he wanted to know why we had returned in a different vehicle. We stuttered and mumbled and made excuses. We had him going now.

He told us that because he was the campus law officer, and under the jurisdiction of the state, he would like to look inside our car. We hesitated and made more excuses, which really aroused his suspicions. Finally we walked over to the car and opened the door.

At this time a couple of city police cars drove up. We overheard Officer James telling his colleagues to stick around, because we might well have committed a serious crime.

Needing his flashlight from inside the dance hall, Officer James told the city police that the keys to the building were in his Chevy unit. Actually, it was a Ford. But this was a clue that our scheme was working.

After searching the car and finding nothing, Officer James asked us to let him look in the trunk. Then we really started to make excuses. His suspicions working overtime now, he made me pop open the trunk. And there it was.

"I guess you guys pulled your last stunt on this campus," Officer James said. He radioed the other officers to tell them there was no need to search further. "These guys stole an engine. Just bring the extra cuffs," he blurted proudly.

The car was a 1963 Corvair.

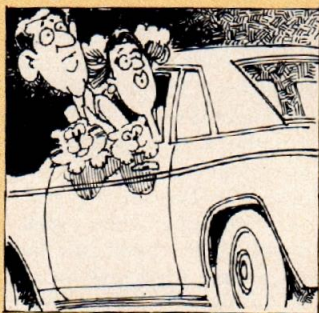
Lonnie Lucero
Las Vegas, New Mexico

Hot Pursuit

Sometimes you just luck out! I did on Washington's Birthday weekend last year, while driving south on the New York Thruway at about ten p.m.

I was cruising at about 80, together with my partner, her two cats, and sufficient luggage to block the rear window of my restored '65 Cutlass convertible. I usually keep a wary eye out for troopers, but I missed this one, who came flying up behind me with his lights and siren going full blast.

I pulled over to the shoulder, and the New York State trooper promptly arrived at my window and asked the usual questions. Just as I was about to hand him my license and registration, though, he looked to his right and yelled, "Holy shit!" Then he started running back toward his cruiser, and my partner, the cats, and I stuck our heads out the window to see what was going on.



The few cars traveling in the two southbound lanes of traffic were screeching to a halt, because the patrol car was crossing in front of them in reverse. The trooper ran after his car as it crossed onto the grass median, ran down a slope, and crashed rear-end first into a guardrail.

The trooper got into his car (which now was on an angle, its headlights searching for speeders in the sky) and drove it back up the embankment, across the highway (where traffic was still stopped), and back to its former position, behind my car.

By this time, I was at his window, asking if he was all right. Visibly shaken, he merely said, "Get out of here," and, as I was leaving, "Drive carefully."

He seemed like a nice guy. I hope that his sergeant never reads this.

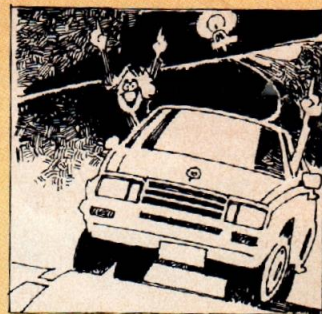
Albert N. Stender
Cranford, New Jersey

Be Prepared

Last summer my father, a former Boy Scout executive, and my mother, an ex-deputy sheriff, were driving from Indiana to Pennsylvania to see my family and me. My father has tended to push the speed limit pretty hard over the years, but with a mixture of luck and charm he has avoided serious scrapes with the law.

In the last hours of the trip, the speedometer needle eased over the 80 mark, and my father thought the prospect of an early arrival was worth the risk. As darkness fell, however, he heard the unmistakable radar-warning beep and saw a Pennsylvania smokey in the oncoming lane, with dead aim on him.

So this pillar of church and community pulled over to await the inevitable, right? Wrong! Taking advantage of traffic and the time it would take the cop to make a U-turn, he floored the Chrysler, drifted through the



Maryland state line, someone noticed the feared blue light through the rear window. The officer made the usual request for ID, then informed us that his radar had clocked us at 77 mph. We expected him to start writing out a ticket, but instead he asked us if we were from the academy. (We were in civilian clothes, but one of our hats was on the back shelf.) At this point we were afraid he would turn us over to the academy administration for "conduct action." Simply paying the fine would be infinitely preferable.

The officer did not go back



nearby exit, and blazed into a shopping-center parking lot. Pulling into a space in the middle, tires smoking, he doused the lights and told my mother, "Get down, Vera." The cop crisscrossed the lot for twenty minutes but was unable to spot the culprit and drove on.

Interesting, but not too unusual a story—until you consider that my father is 83 and my mother 78. When I asked him what ever possessed him to do that, risking jail and worse, he said, "I just had more important business to get done than talking to that cop..."

David A. Riggs
Pennington, New Jersey

Go, Team!

I am a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. Last December, I was riding back from the Army-Navy game in Philadelphia with my girlfriend and several other mids. My girlfriend had flown in from Florida for the weekend, and we were in a hurry to make it back to Baltimore for her return flight.

Shortly after we crossed the

to his radio, though. Nor did he pull out his book of tickets. He just took a long look around the inside of the car, then said, "You better be glad you won."

Steve Rowe
Annapolis, Maryland

Blind Justice

A couple of years back, my boss and I had to be in Pascagoula, Mississippi. There is not much to see or do in Pascagoula. Sorry, friends, but it's the truth. We stayed instead in beautiful Biloxi, the jewel of the gulf, where they actually have a Holiday Inn, a Hilton, and a Howard Johnson's. I mean, this is a hot town. It's sort of the Newark, New Jersey, of the "Redneck Riviera."

Having stayed out late one evening, we arose late the next morning and had to hustle to make our meeting in Pascagoula. The road between the two megatropolises is Highway 90, a fairly nice drive. Soon out of Biloxi, however, on one of the landscaped medians, a Mississippi trooper was lurking neatly in the palmettos, where we didn't have a chance of spotting

her in time. (The women cops are the toughest: they have more to prove.)

I knew I was had as soon as I saw her. I could actually see the gleam in Miss Piggy's eyes as her radar indicated I was severely over the limit. Her lights began to flash, and she started to emerge from the trees, and I felt my gut wrench from that intangible dread of cops that has been instilled in all citizens who live in heavily policed states such as ours.



As we passed her, however, we could see that she was concentrating too intently on her victim—so intently that she totally ignored the palmetto that lay directly in her path. The tree—a valiant ally from this reporter's viewpoint—shuddered but did not bend. The look on Mississippi's finest changed quickly from that of happy predator to startled disbelief as her cruiser was suddenly customized.

Did we pull over? Are you kidding?!

Mark J. Kellum
Orlando, Florida

Running on Empty

Some twenty years ago, I was living in Fayetteville, New York, a suburb of Syracuse. One Saturday morning, I drove to the campus of Syracuse University, where I spent several hours taking a college-entrance exam.

On the way home, just as I passed the "Fayetteville Village Limits" sign, the Chrysler ran out of gas—although the gauge indicated that nearly a quarter of a tank remained. I brought the car to a halt on the shoulder of the highway, a stretch of Route 5 where "No Parking" signs had been placed. I walked a couple of blocks to a phone and called a friend to ask him to bring a gallon of gas.

When I returned to the scene of the disabled Chrysler, I immediately made two disturbing



observations: (1) a parking ticket was pinned beneath the passenger-side windshield wiper, and (2) parked behind my car was the Fayetteville police cruiser, from which was emerging an officer of the law.

I saw that ticket as insult added to injury. It triggered a sense of outrage, frustration, and anger from deep within, reaching back to all those other traffic citations I had so undeservedly received in the not-too-distant past. So, when the officer asked, "Can I be of any help?" I really let him have it.

"Help? What kind of help d'ya call *that*? A guy runs outa gas and then he finds a parking ticket on the windshield! I don't need that kind of help..."

I kept it up for a while, in spite of the fact that I could see that the officer was struggling to prevent himself from doing something drastic. Soon my friend and his father arrived with the gas and witnessed some of my tirade.

The cop finally turned to my friend's father and said, "This your son?"

"No."

"You should be glad." With that, he got into his cruiser and drove away.

After pouring the gas into the Chrysler's tank, I pulled the parking ticket from under the windshield wiper. Only then did I realize that I had no cause to be angry at the Fayetteville officer.

The ticket had been issued by the Syracuse police department, three hours earlier.

Allen Walrath
Nelliston, New York

Unwritten Law

It was a beautiful morning, and I needed to clear my head for a chemistry exam, so I elected to take the back road and my GPz750 to school. Arriving at the first stoplight, I found myself behind a 5.0-liter Capri. When the light changed, the Capri began to accelerate quickly. I rolled back the throttle and kept with him.

We were just starting to get moving—an indicated 90

mph—when we entered the last stretch of road before a stop sign. The road widens to two lanes after the sign, and I was anticipating blowing by the Capri. But then I glanced in my rear-view mirror and noticed my friendly public servant signaling to me with his red light.

The officer pulled both the Capri and me over and began with the standard "Just how fast do you think you were going?" My chem test was just fifteen minutes away, so I was prepared to fess up and get a ticket.

Fortunately, however, the officer ticketed the Capri driver before I could tell him of my predicament. He then walked back to my bike, opened his ticket book, and, with a puzzled look, realized he was out of tickets! He looked in his car without any luck. Thankfully, my helmet hid my growing smirk.



I informed the policeman of my impending midterm, and he called one of his colleagues to fetch some fresh citations.

When I had just seven minutes left to get to class, the officer told me I could leave. He left first. Just as he was vanishing over the top of the hill, his buddy appeared from the opposite direction. Still filled with disbelief, I started my bike and headed for school.

My luck held for the entire day. I aced my midterm!

Adam Meyerson
Santa Barbara, California

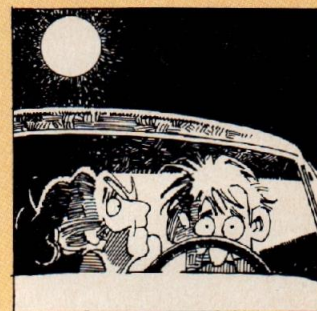
On Thin Ice

I was but knee-high to a Brussels sprout, maybe sixteen or seventeen years old, living in Michigan. It was late winter, and the ice on Lake Saint Clair was mushy in places.

Susan and I loved to park on

the lake in my very snug 914. It was our secret place. We would begin and end our sessions with a series of wild, 360-degree spins. It was fun.

We were rather absorbed in each other when I heard the unmistakable sound of a police radio. Soon a flashlight was on us.



Officer Frank Lee, of Saint Clair Shores' finest, took my license. "Are you Bob's brother?" he asked suspiciously. My brother Bob had ended his unillustrious high-school career by setting his Buick Wildcat afire and driving it into the doors of the gym, bailing out just in time.

"No, sir," I respectfully said. "He's not part of our family anymore."

"Good," he said, and walked back to his squad car.

As he opened his door, a very loud crackling noise filled the air, and both he and his car dropped through the ice. He resurfaced quickly and pulled himself out.

As I drove him to the station, where he was to attempt to book me on some ludicrous charge, I could not help releasing a suppressed laugh. "You think it's funny, don't you?" he demanded. "I almost got killed. You're just like your brother."

"At least we don't get wet when we ice-fish," I retorted.

Officer Lee's captain was furious. "How the hell could you do such a stupid thing?!" he shrieked at Lee, who just stood there, dripping.

Finally, Lee said to me, "I can't understand why I went under and you didn't... I did have a few things in my trunk that I was taking home."

"Like what?" his captain asked.

"Seven or eight boxes of magazines," he said.

"Oh?" I asked. "What kind?"

"Motor Trend," he replied.

Mark Steven Renusch
Newport Beach, California