

A non-police officer friend of mine once told me he thought cops had some of the best workplace stories he had ever heard. At the time, I didn't really pay much attention to his comment. However, a few months later I was listening to Ed Davis – a dear friend of mine and the newly appointed Commissioner of the Boston Police Department – telling a hilarious cop story, and I realized my buddy was right. Cops really do have great stories to tell! While policing can certainly be dangerous, and at times quite tedious, it's also fun. Being a cop has been the best job I can imagine, and I wouldn't trade a minute of my career.

In 1979, I was a rookie street cop, enjoying life and having trouble believing I was actually getting paid to be a Redlands police officer. Saving people, catching crooks and driving with lights and sirens were all part of the great adventure. Every day was a great day in Redlands!

About 11 p.m. on a warm summer evening I was dispatched to the report of two men fighting in the front yard of a house. When I arrived with another officer and his reserve officer partner, we saw that the combatants were actually a father and son, grappling on the ground. As it turned out, the father was simply trying to control his very intoxicated, violent teen-age son.

The other officer and I jumped in to help the father and it took all three of us to control the kid. The reserve officer stood by to “cover our backs.”

All of a sudden, the teen-ager's 10-year-old brother snuck up behind me and kicked me right in the rear end. I turned around, and in my best Police Academy-trained voice, declared, “Hey, you can't do that!”

The kid then took off running. Our reserve officer stood there, mouth agape, in shock at the obvious transgression that had occurred right in front of him (so much for watching our backs!). I shouted to the reserve officer, “Don't just stand there. Get him!” He ran after the offending kid and caught him down the street.

After we subdued his older brother we counseled the misguided youth about his socially unacceptable actions and released him to his dad.

We transported the older brother to the police station where he sobered up and was later released to his father. I continued my shift, saving humanity (OK, maybe just serving the people of Redlands).

The next day the Redlands Daily Facts ran a story (obviously culled from our daily press logs) that recounted how Officer Bueermann was assaulted. Helpfully, the story pointed out how the young officer was kicked in the rear end during the aforementioned struggle.

As I was working nights, I had not yet read the paper when I reported for work. The first thing I saw in our coffee room was the article posted on the wall. One of my helpful colleagues had re-written the headline to read “Bueermann Gets Butt Kicked by 10-year-old!” This was gonna be a long shift!

Our patrol briefing that night was a ball of laughter – for my buddies. No matter how many times I tried to explain that the 10-year-old was a REALLY BIG kid, they

laughed at me. No matter how many times I tried to explain that when a REALLY BIG 10-year-old kicks your butt it REALLY HURTS, they laughed at me. And no matter how helpful the sergeant was trying to be in explaining to my peers that my police academy training was obviously deficient regarding how to defend myself from attacks by REALLY BIG 10-year-olds, and therefore, it wasn't really my fault for getting my butt kicked by a REALLY BIG 10-year-old (gee, thanks sarge!), they still laughed.

In the middle of briefing the phone rings, making matters slightly more challenging for young Officer Bueermann. An officer answered, listened for a moment, turned to us and said in the most compassionate tone he could muster between fits of laughter, "Bueermann, it's your mom. She wants to make sure you're OK after being assaulted last night!"

Eventually, the laughter subsided enough so I could hear my dear mother on the phone.

"Hi, mom," I said.

"Hi, Jimmy," she said. "I'm just calling to make sure you're OK. The paper said you were assaulted last night and I'm worried about you. Have you seen the doctor yet? What did he say? Did you get an X-ray? Do you need to stay at our house to recuperate?"

"Mom," I said. "I'm OK. Even though he was a REALLY BIG 10-year-old, I've recovered. I didn't see the doctor, nor did I get an X-ray. I'll be OK. Really." (More laughter from the guys. Tears beginning to form in their eyes).

"I can bring a heating pad down to the station for you. How about some aspirin? Will they let you stay inside the station till you feel better? Let me talk to your sergeant!"

"No, mom, I don't need a heating pad or aspirin. But thanks anyway. And, no, I can't stay inside the station till I feel better. And, no, you absolutely cannot talk to the sarge." (Hysterical laughter from my "buddies." Tears flowing freely. They are starting to fall from their chairs).

"OK, honey. You'll call me if you need anything, won't you? I love you!"

"Yes, mom, I'll call if I need anything. Thanks for checking. Goodbye. I love you too." (Cops now laughing so hard they can't breathe, speak or respond to calls. Great time to rob a bank).

Like I said, police work can be dangerous. But it's also fun.

I now tell police officers as they're preparing to start their shifts, "Let's be careful out there. And watch out for those 10-year-olds!"

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