

## About That...

AUDREY ROBERTS

ABOUT THAT TIME WHEN I GOT ARRESTED goes something like this. My two friends and I all grew up in Orient, Ohio and we were only about five to ten minutes away from Grove City, but we were still somehow in the middle of nowhere, which can clearly deduce one to boredom. You see, around the time that this story took place it'd been about one week after I turned fourteen and my friends and I wanted to go to the mall because it was blazing hot outside, I'm talking straight up hell fire, because it was the beginning of August and it was the sort of heat that melted your shoes to the black top below them. It was gross, and we didn't stand for it. And so, we begged my friend's aunt to take us to the mall. Well, we got stopped short, for reasons that you'll soon find out. At the time, this situation didn't feel as funny then, at least to my parents, but now looking back, I really can't help but laugh.

My friend May had a weird past but somehow, she had some even weirder neighbors. I mean the types that wouldn't let their (somehow perfectly normal) daughter (by way of miracle), also known as our friend Jenna, use a tampon because somehow this would, "defile her within the eyes of the great Lord," or some other phrase that made you believe you would be sent to the nice hot oven that was Dante's crispy inferno.

And that family truly was all nine circles of hell. So, since Jenna couldn't go swimming that day because her dad stated that he would somehow know whether she had used a tampon or not, (seems like he should be on a watch list for this, but that's fine....) May and I had to devise a plan to get Jenna out of this *Flowers in the Attic* situation. We decided that we would all somehow con May's aunt Sue, into driving us to the mall to escape this persistent, god awful heat and offer us some source of entertainment, and entertainment we did indeed receive.

"Sue?" May and I asked with a sort of contorted, pain enduring expression, suspecting the worst. Almost like wincing, but also trying to keep our shit together.

"What do you guys want now?" She said it like a joke, but she wasn't a woman who did that, so you knew what she meant. Her immediate thoughts being, these ungrateful children actually want something. I know Sue, absolutely psycho that children should need

something. Back then I swear she despised anyone under the age of thirty and that included ourselves.

“Well, we were all wondering if you’d take us to the mall?”

“Let me think about it for a while. And in the meantime, you guys need to clean around here, the house is a mess because of you two!” It wasn’t... She was just manic.

After several hours of what you might call “recollecting” about it, Sue finally broke down and said that May needed some back-to-school clothing anyhow. So, we all piled into this half broken down Ford Explorer, with the once red tinted paint that had chips missing nearly everywhere, replaced by rust spots, so it was browner and more metallic looking than its original slick, shiny red color. It must have been a family car once upon a time, but whatever, it was transportation for us. The car had character; I’ll tell you that.

The seats were comprised of this dingy black leather and our legs were persistent on sticking to them, without any reprieve whatsoever. You see Sue decided she would give us an ultimatum, as if she hadn’t already by way of forcing us to clean everything (to her liking). She exclaimed that if we wanted to go to the mall then she needed to stop at Kohl’s beforehand to pick up some new cookware, as if she weren’t already hoarding it in their already tiny kitchen, but that’s great.

Her kitchen cabinets practically burst at the seams, screaming torturously for help, but hey if the woman wants more cookware, then more cookware she shall have. Sue was a scary woman, she was nearly six feet tall, and she had this gelled,

spiked, highlighted haircut that sort of reminded me of every member of NSYNC at some point throughout their careers. It was as if instead of the frosted tips, JT decided to go for some random red tint thrown in there somewhere. Sue also would not only frequently hand out ultimatums, but she collectively decided to make May feel like a charity case all the time.

You see Sue took in her poor and abused niece, May, around when she was eight years old. Only what Sue failed to recognize was that May wasn’t that poor abused child anymore. But nonetheless, Sue would not dare to blame anything on that child, ever. But somehow she was fine with blaming her for the things that she didn’t actually do. Such as calling her a blasphemous whore for wearing her jean shorts to a degree in which Sue would call them too short (as if they weren’t already Amish in nature, but yeah. Let’s go with too short). Take parenting notes, because this is good stuff, I’m giving you here... Call your child a blasphemous whore, CHECK. Phenomenal stuff.

May, for the most part, was like Sue’s harmless halo wearing angel, only little did she know that her beloved niece was more like a nightmarish heathen. Even her name, “May,” made her sound like some gloriously new Bath and Body Works scent. She looked like her name too, because she sported some medium length, shiny brown hair that was as straight as a needle and she was also hazardously short. You wouldn’t expect anything “awful, and absolutely horrible” to come from her, as May’s aunt would later say to me, concerning myself. It was always May who was being corrupted but let me tell you that girl was a wild child and her aunt still cannot stop the hurricane that is her to

this day. She was the friend that broke into the community pool with me for a late-night swim, and the one that taught me cheat codes on *GTA V*, and the one that also got arrested with me (and not solely because of me, as Sue would wish to later claim).

But there was also Jenna.

Jenna and I were giants compared to everyone else our age, and always had been. Jenna had this crazy curly hair that was nearly black, but not quite that dark. She would always try to sneak in a streak of pink or green to protest the prison-like religious household that she was confined to. Seems like a trend when you live in the middle of nowhere huh? This poor girl went to school, came home, and her father only gave her an hour to come outside. It was absurd and she always knew it.

You should see her now.

Nowadays she dyes her hair whatever color she wants and not only a minuscule section of it either. Her skin is absolutely covered with these intricately beautiful tattoos, and more important than anything she seems happy. But occasionally, we all still get together and laugh about how this whole situation unraveled.

So, onto the good bits of the story, and for anyone who wants to shoplift, I suggest you don't do it at a Kohl's because their security departments are usually comprised of two absurdly bored dudes that will most definitely look like the *Impractical Jokers*. They just stare, excuse me, that's offensive, they "monitor" screens all day and I'm willing to bet you that they get paid way too much for it too, but despite this they still probably live with their parents. They enjoyed themselves quite a lot that day, but surprisingly I feel like we were the ones that

had the better time looking back on it now.

So, we walked into Kohl's and we all three had book bags on (very inconspicuous, I know) and of course my dad being the electrician that he is, there were always these magnificent little trinkets and tools lying about and in this collection, there were some Earth magnets. Now, for those of you that may not know these magnets have the strength of Thor's hammer and they're perfect for removing security tags on clothes, or other various items, if you're brave enough. Which we knew because we had all thoroughly done our homework on the academic subject of thieving.

We searched throughout the store finding items to "try on" but we would just take it to the dressing room and pocket it. I know what you may be thinking, May and I corrupted our poor church friend Jenna right? Well wrong... This magical experience was shockingly all Jenna's idea and we all thought that it was absolutely marvelous. I won't bore you with too many details for time's sake.

"Look, just tell Sue we have to carry our bookbags to hold our feminine products because she won't shake us down for that. Okay?" Said the conniving May.

"Okay. But May I feel like she has to know." I replied because I swear to Christ that woman knows everything.

"No, she doesn't know you guys. Just chill." She told me.

So, with our bookbags full we were on the move. Only little did we know so were our good pals in security. It looked like Jersey Shore touched them with a magic wand and believe it or not they didn't change back into

themselves like Cinderella did after the whole wand debacle. The hair, along with the awful deep V-neck shirts, along with the dad jeans. There was also this concoction of far too much cheap cologne that they had insisted on wearing for this very doom's day, but it was all an explosive mixture like a chemistry project gone wrong because our friends were not very kind to us believe it or not, despite the fantastic aroma circulating throughout the room, if you can even call it that.

So, they hustled us promptly into a room (closet), along with the ice queen, old aunt Sue and we were stuck feeling all three of their fiery glares just searing into our eyes forever. I felt like Harry Potter when that evil bitch Professor Umbridge made him endure torture by having him burn "I must not tell lies" into his skin, only for my generation the burn comes from unwarranted eye contact. And that whole spiel about "I must not tell lies" was being burned into my eyes through Sue's two soulless daggers. I mean it felt like the woman was throwing knives specifically at me. But, after introducing ourselves to these kind men, we filled out a ton of paperwork, with so many signatures it made me feel like I was signing a lease. While flipping through monotonous pages, still not caring to read them because I was fourteen, auntie Sue said something to me specifically, that I still can't help but laugh about today.

Sue decided to have the audacity on that very afternoon, to say to me "You little drug addict. This is all your fault you know. I know you smoke the marijuana because your eyes always look like that, and I don't want you corrupting my May Marie anymore." Wow. Adults might be less grown

up than we were. Who could have guessed? Not I.

What a woman right? Her speech was always too fast, she always seemed like she was jumpy and in a hurry, even when she wasn't. Maybe I should have asked her if she was the crack head, damn lady. Well, I do not smoke "the marijuana" for those of you wondering. Sue just always felt the need to ask me about this because she felt that my eyes were always glazed over. It's almost like I was tired. I will give it to her that my eyes do look like that but it was just my eyes and my blatant hatred for life, along with the impending lack of sleep, not "the marijuana" that she thought that I had just so happened to have smoked. Anyways, this lady was always jittering, I mean she was addicted to painkillers and decided to ask me about my extracurricular activities.

Sue's not-at-all-aggressive comment caused quite the uproar in the room because Jenna and May both stepped in to tell her just how wrong she was. So, our friend in security that wore that pungent, repulsive cologne that smelled like Lysol spray, you remember him? Well, the audacity of this particular room spread like a disease because my good fellow proceeded to scream, "On the count of three, I want everybody quiet." "One..." As if I hadn't been used to being yelled at by men. So, I took it upon myself to kindly finish his sentence for him, by saying "Two, Three."

Now as I had mentioned the audacity just kept spreading and now, I had been holding the talking stick. I couldn't help myself. And my lovely friend Jenna couldn't stop laughing and I'm talking the sort of laughter that makes you pee yourself. So, after it all

May got a slap on the wrist. Can you guess what Jenna and I got? A couple of court dates. Ah, the festivities.

So, Jenna and I got court assigned to do ten hours of community service, write a “heartfelt” apology to the security “personnel” at Kohl’s, and my personal favorite section of our punishment, we had to go to a simulated court for juveniles. In this simulated court we would play the lawyers, bailiff’s, stuff like that, and we would decide the real punishments for other delinquent and deviant juvenile scum, such as ourselves.

A law school student played the judge and although I might have forgotten what his name was, his personality was a little bit more difficult to wipe from our memories. Our anonymous judge liked to play around. He had these wicked double-jointed fingers and would do some rather hilarious activities with them. His favorite pastime being to make dinosaur shapes using his fingers and run them through people’s hair while screeching like what he thought a dinosaur would sound like. He was peculiar, but he made punishment surely feel like fun.

Throughout our wonderful time spent at the Franklin County Court we got to see kids on trial that would say things in front of the court (other living human beings) such as, “Yeah, I hit my mom because she wouldn’t make me a sandwich... and she’s a bitch. Forreal forreal.” Now this kid looked exactly like B-Rad from *Malibu’s Most Wanted*, and he had the precise vernacular to play him too. This kid in particular, we saw on quite a few separate occasions throughout the months that I spent doing this court simulation. Oh, and his name

was George so, watch out for all the Georges’ ladies because you’d better be good at making sandwiches if you want to wrangle this one into a loving, caring relationship.

So, ladies and gentlemen this was about the time that I got arrested. And I cannot stress this enough, do not, and I repeat, do not shoplift at Kohl’s because you will be caught and put on trial in front of the justified eyes of the law (also known as mister dinosaur fingers). But really do not shoplift, because as the “judge” told me “it will save you a lot of trouble.” \*