

The Seventh Grade Gas Leak

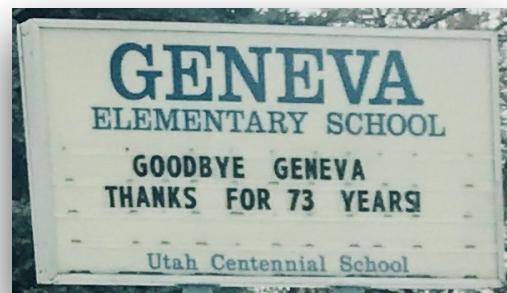
—Ron Leavitt

Foreword—

This is a true memory—full of genuine adolescent awkwardness, immature brilliance, and the gut-level truth of what it feels like to be 12 and trying way *too hard* to make a mark. "The Seventh Grade Gas Leak" is a personal narrative recalling a pivotal and embarrassing moment from my first day of junior high in September 1968. The text explores themes of adolescent awkwardness, the desire for acceptance, and the impact of a memorable social faux pas involving a classroom full of flatulence. I recount our move from Orem to Midvale, my aspirations for junior high sports and beyond, and the strict dress codes of the era. The core of the story focuses on a school lunch gone wrong that leads to a "gas leak" in social studies class, resulting in my expulsion and the lasting disdain of a classmate. Through this humorous yet reflective account, I also touch upon the search for happiness and gratitude in life.

The Seventh Grade Gas Leak

I was north of elated to view elementary school—Geneva Elementary and Midvale Elementary—in the rearview mirror. The month was September. The year, 1968. A fresh start. A different school—Midvale Junior High. My rookie year of junior high. Life was moving on.



Geneva Elementary
700 W 400 North, Orem, UT
The school has since been torn down

In early June of 1967, just days after finishing 5th grade at Geneva Elementary in Orem, Utah, my family moved from 674 West Center Street to 340 Cypress Street in Midvale. I was heartbroken to leave Orem. I had close friends there, and a handful of childhood

crushes—Janet Moss, Debra Williams, Frankie Black, Kelli Clegg, Taralyne Farley. My favorite girl was Pamela Blackley. I really liked those pretty girls—never saw ‘em again.

I was excited to play Little League baseball that summer and couldn’t wait to start 6th grade at Orem Junior High. I had even attended a basketball camp at the junior high, run by the school’s coach. After watching me play, he looked right at me and said, “Ronnie, you’re going to be a good basketball player.” That meant everything to me.



Midvale Elementary
362 Center Street, Midvale, UT
The school has since been torn down

But Dad and Mother had other plans. We were moving to Midvale, and nothing I said was going to change that. I was crushed. So were my dreams. And to make matters worse, I discovered 6th graders in Midvale didn’t get to go to junior high—they were still in elementary school. That hit hard. Eventually, I accepted the move, and I made the best of 6th grade in Midvale. I even earned a nickname that stuck: “The Fast One.”

The first day of seventh grade dawned bright. I felt confusion but no panic when assigned my very own locker. The eighth and ninth graders stared me down with odd looks. Some appeared to rule by fear. I wondered if they were putting me

on notice. I shrugged off the chilly reception, promising myself I’d be nice to the timid seventh graders when I was older and a seasoned veteran of junior high.

Busy attempting to love life, I had imagined a million versions of my future. My far-reaching ambitions were simple. Reasonable. To me anyway. Get good grades. Learn what I needed to keep Mother and Dad happy. Lay eyes on the pretty girls. And play sports. The way I saw it, Midvale Junior was my ticket—a means to an end. To make it to the Show—the Big Leagues—Major League Baseball. The NBA. The NFL. Any of them. All of them. My heart tilted toward baseball, but who knew. I had the drive times ten. The ambition. The



Midvale Junior High School
Pioneer Street, Midvale, UT
The school has since been torn down



Big Sis, Bonnie

commitment. My skills were in need of scads of work. Three years of junior high was the ideal amount of time to prepare me for high school sports. It was against this backdrop I began junior high.

No t-shirts! No shorts! Are you kidding me?



Big Sis, Janet

My poor older sisters were required to wear a dress or skirt to school—to their knees. If there was any doubt about the length, the *dress-to-floor-on-their-knees test* was administered. Rebellion among girls meant rolling the waistband of their skirt to raise the hem just an inch above the knees. That was as bold as it got.

My shirt had to be tucked in. No exceptions! Mother's rules. Dad's orders. Jordan School District policy. There was no escaping the dress code police—not at home, not at church, and definitely not at school.

I wore Bass Weejuns—penny loafers. Cordovan in color. I spit-shined those shoes so thoroughly the U.S. Army would've approved. Nearly every day, I gave them a fresh coat of polish.

But I never put pennies in the penny slots—too cheap. I inserted dimes instead. Bass Weejuns were the perfect place to stash emergency money. With two dimes, I could buy nearly anything I needed. By seventh grade, pennies no longer packed the same punch they had back in fifth and sixth. If I was flush with dough, I went big: quarters. Fifty cents in my loafers made me feel like a young tycoon.

Mr. Thomson, our hard-nosed vice principal, insisted we wear socks. I wasn't happy about his unreasonable rules. I thought the sock-free loafer look was sharp. Cool. Advanced. But I gave in. I decided bare ankles could wait until high school.

Truth is, I didn't have the guts—or the disposition—for junior high mischief. Not really. I hated getting whipped. I saw no reason to invite pain into my life...

Until my first day of seventh grade.

My fifteen-cent school lunch did not sit well. With anyone. After wolfing down a couple of tacos, my stomach turned lumpy and sour—like something was chewing *me* from



the inside out. I tried to be social, but my gut was rumbling like distant thunder. The whole crew of us was gassy and miserable. I assumed the girls were suffering quietly too, though my sisters, Bonnie and Janet, had always sworn up and down that girls didn't toot. That made no sense to me, but they were my big sisters, and they never lied. I believed every word. Still, I sometimes wondered how girls handled their... "air-like substances." Had Heavenly Father outfitted the superior gender with built-in gas silencers?



Susan (high school photo)

By seventh period—Social Studies with Mr. Sumbott—I was hanging on by a thread. His class was upstairs in C Wing, and the walk there felt like a hike to West Jordan. The good news? A few of my friends were in the class. So was a girl I didn't recognize—she had transferred in from East Midvale. Brunette hair, violet eyes, and she sat on the front row. Her name was Susan. At first glance, I thought she was kind of an eyeful. Twice, she caught me staring, and both times I looked away, confused by her beauty.

Then came the problem: not enough desks. Dad had always taught me to be a gentleman, so I gave mine up to a girl—er, a *lady*. My friends Tracy Goris, Richard Koos, and David Fritz—fellow deacons from the Midvale 1st Ward—followed suit. We found spots on the waist-high bookshelves along the back windows. Mr. Sumbott

took roll, then left to find more desks, leaving us unsupervised.

That's when it happened.

Something was trying to tear its way out of my insides. I tried holding it in, but then two golden opportunities presented themselves: one for comedy, and one to impress Susan. I knew it was risky, but the moment felt... inevitable. I let it go, hoping for a silent one. It wasn't. The explosion echoed off the bookshelf. I felt the vibration in my spine.

The whole class went silent—then erupted in laughter. Everyone, that is, except Susan. She shot me a glare through her black-rimmed glasses that could've stopped a freight train.

"You're sick!" she spat, like I was a piece of gum on the bottom of her shoe.

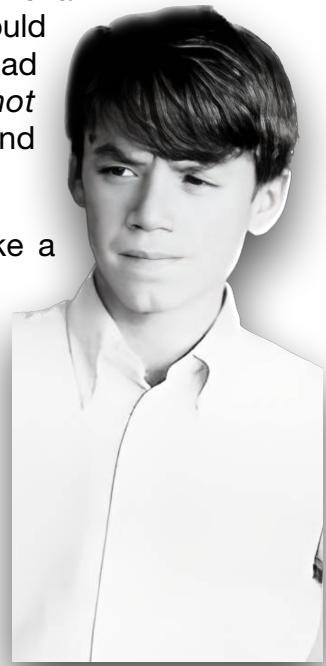


Mr. Sumbott



Tracy Goris (sketch of high school image)

Definitely not the reaction I was hoping for. I was torn between pride and shame. I felt like a flopoodle. I wished the floor would swallow me up. Bonnie and Janet had never warned me girls might *not* appreciate a poor kid breaking wind when in a bind.



Me, 7th Grade

rip one the loudest? The longest? It became a symphony of one tooter after another.

Even Susan was plugging her nose now. “You guys are gross!” she whined. We were, but we were also having the time of our lives, avenging our stomachs on the taco gods.

Then—disaster. Mr. Sumbott walked back in.

He stepped right into the brown cloud. He paused. Sniffed. Gagged.

“What is going on here!?” he bellowed, peering over his glasses, scratching his bald head in disbelief. His scholarly composure crumbled. He opened a few windows, but it was too late—we were already past the point of no return.



Richard Kooz (sketch of high school image)

David Fritz (sketch of high school image)

Tracy launched a massive one. Sumbott kicked him out. David followed with a duck-call blast. Booted. Richard dropped a low, rolling thunder. Out he went.

“He started it!” Susan announced, pointing at me like I was a war criminal.

Mr. Sumbott marched me toward the door.

“But—but—Mr. Sumbott—Bonnie and Janet Leavitt are my big sisters!”

“I don’t care! Your sisters are *well-behaved!* They’d never stink up my classroom!”

“Well, that’s only because they *can’t!* They told me girls *can’t toot!*”

He was not buying it. Not that day.

So there we sat—me, Tracy, Richard, and David—in the second-floor hallway, expelled for cutting the cheese in class. Then Mr. Thomson, the vice principal, came around the corner. He zeroed in on us with that permanent scowl of his.

“What are you boys doing out of class?”

I swallowed. My heart raced.

“Uh... you don’t want to know, sir,” I offered weakly.

He didn’t laugh. He stared. “What did you do? What’s so funny? ... Out ... out with it!!!”

Wrong choice of words.

All four of us erupted again—our last bits of gas squeezed out as we burst into uncontrollable laughter.



Mr. Thomson

Even Mr. Thomson cracked. His face turned red, and then he was laughing too. There we were, rolling in the hallway, a bunch of seventh-grade boys completely unhinged.

That night, while doing my homework, I made an easy decision: Susan wasn’t nearly as pretty as I’d thought.

Looking back, I don’t know why I acted like that—why I was so crude, immature, and socially reckless on my first day of junior high. Maybe it was just the follies of youth. But I think it was deeper than that. I wanted connection. I wanted to be noticed. To belong. To matter.

Civility asked more of me than I gave that day.

But what did I know, anyway? I had just turned twelve three short months earlier.

I continued marching through life like an unstoppable machine. All I wanted was to be happy. Okay, I'll admit it—happy, and a ballplayer.

Sometimes happiness found me, but most of the time I had to chase it down. So I started by looking around for the blessings that were already mine. And when I found them, I tried to be grateful. I thanked Heavenly Father. I did my best to show appreciation for every single day, no matter how flawed or foolish it had been.

And most of all—I had faith. Faith in God. Faith in His Church. Faith in a better tomorrow.

Afterword—

Susan Thompson never seemed to forget my crass behavior from that infamous first day of seventh grade back in '68.

We were classmates at Midvale Junior High through 7th, 8th, and 9th grade. Then we both attended Hillcrest High School—Sophomore through Senior year. We sat through many classes together. We shared common friends. We passed each other in the halls every day. We ate lunch in the same cafeteria. Parked in the same parking lot. Sang in the same choirs.

And in all that time—six full years of adolescence and growing up—not once did she smile at me. At best, she tolerated me.

Every time our eyes met, she gave me that same look she'd given me in Mr. Sumbott's classroom: I was still dog dirt.

Notes—

I wasn't able to uncover pictures of Tracy Goris, Richard Koos, David Fritz, and Susan Thompson from 7th Grade or Junior High—Midvale Junior High didn't offer us yearbooks at the time. The sketches of them are from high school photos. The photographs of Mr. Sumbott and Mr. Thomson are from the '60's—they look just like I remember them. The Penny Loafers pictured are how mine always looked, except mine had either dimes or quarters in the penny slots.

Access the link to a NotebookLM Podcast of
The 7th Grade Gas Leak by scanning this QR code

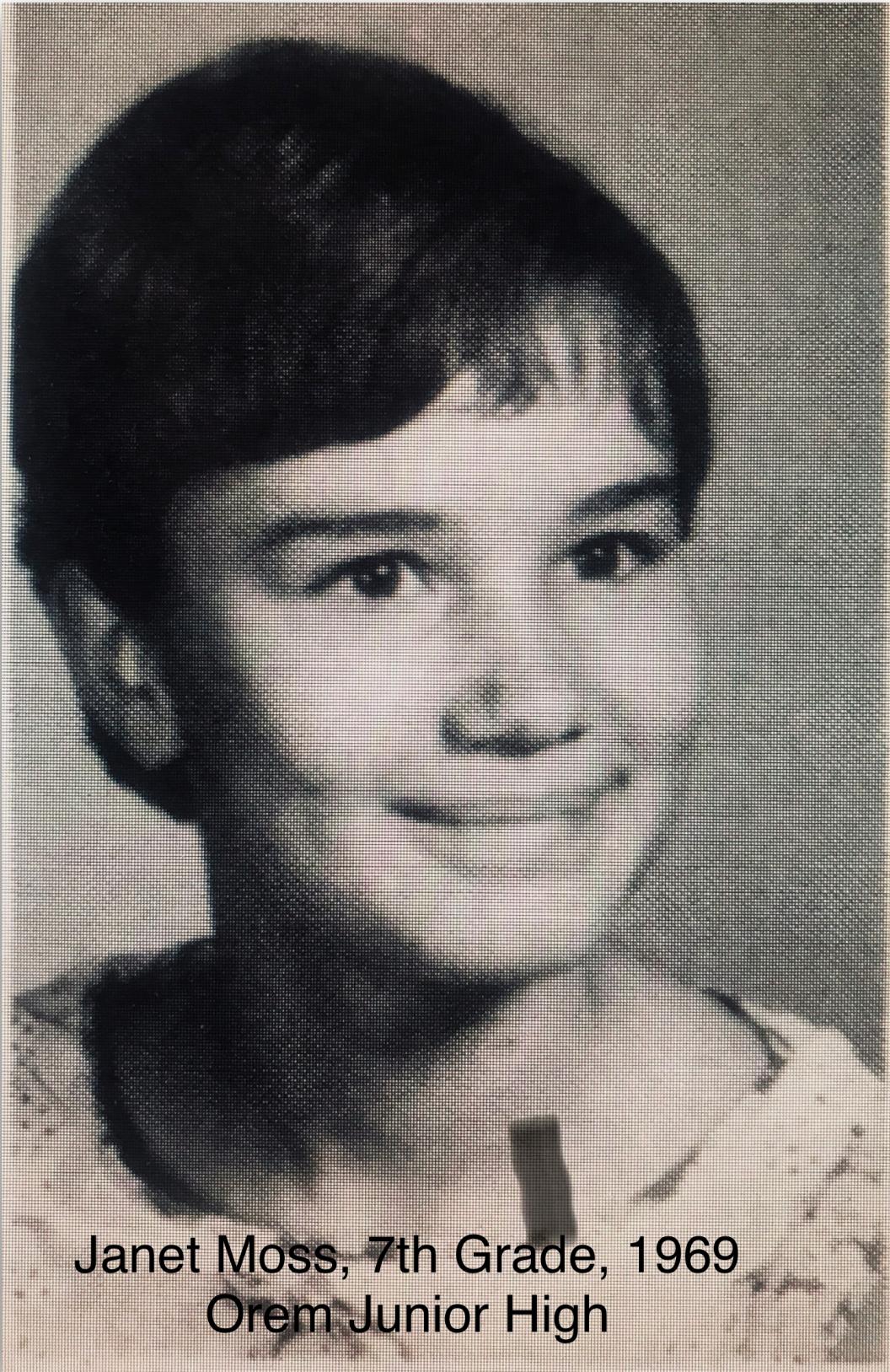


Bryce and Ella Beth Leavitt Family, Salt Lake City, UT, March 7, 1992

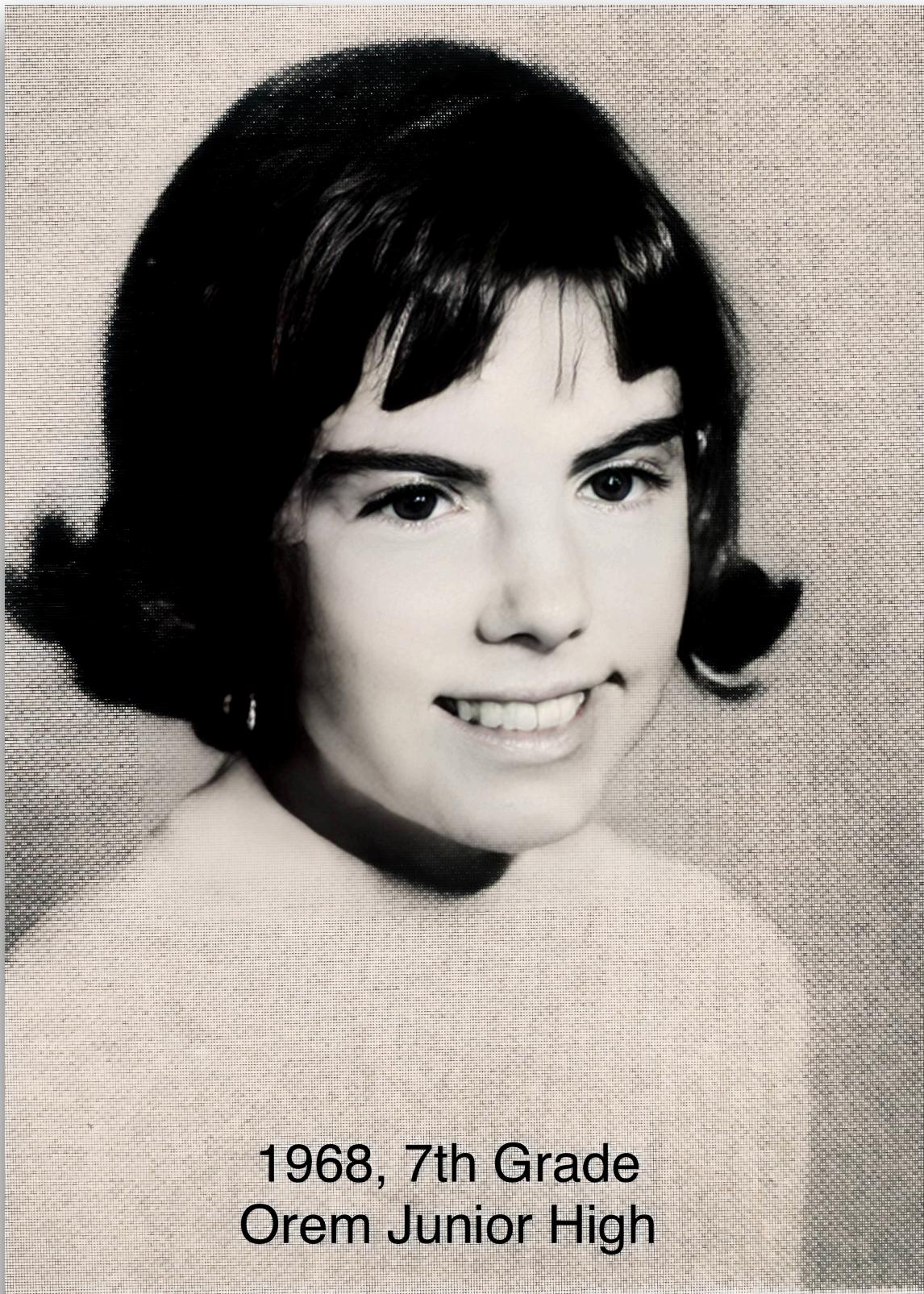
L-R: David, Ron, Steve, Dennis, Bryce, Ella Beth, Kathleen, Bonnie, Janet, Kristine

Bonnie and Janet really were my mentors, my guides, my confidants, especially when it came to the facts of life—virgin births, intestinal disturbances, and how to chase girls. I included this photo because Bonnie and Janet are giggling—we were at Grandma's (Mary Ann Davies Leavitt) funeral, yet no doubt they're laughing because they remember convincing me it was impossible for a female to break wind. As our teenage years progressed, they proved they had intentionally misinformed me. But for years, the joke was on me. Mr. Sumbott adored them—after the impeccable example they set before me, he couldn't believe a member of the Leavitt family was capable of behaving the way I did that infamous day. I still love ya, Big Sisters!

I thought I should include my
Childhood “CRUSHES” from Orem
I could share fond memories of them all day ...

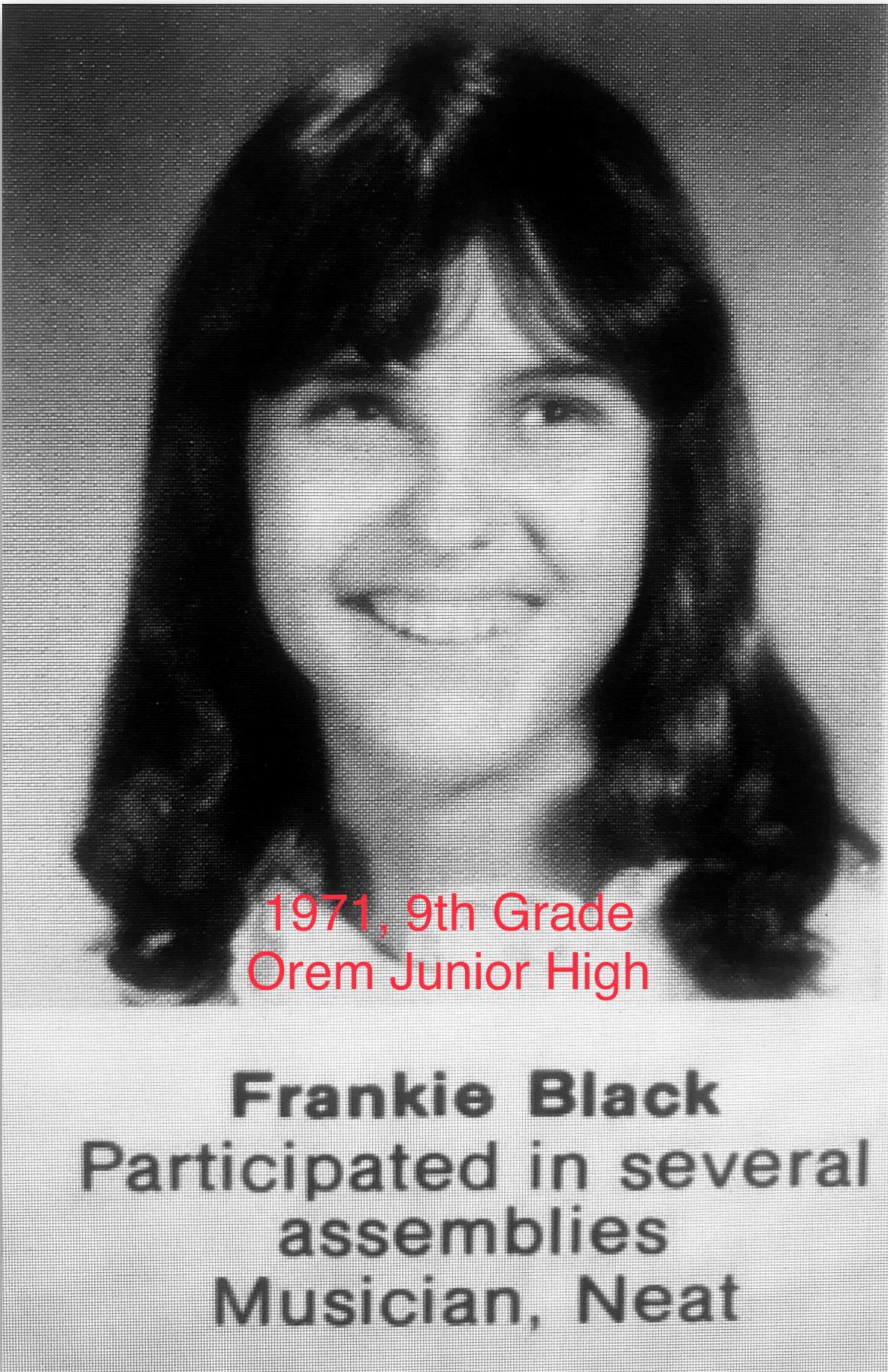


**Janet Moss, 7th Grade, 1969
Orem Junior High**



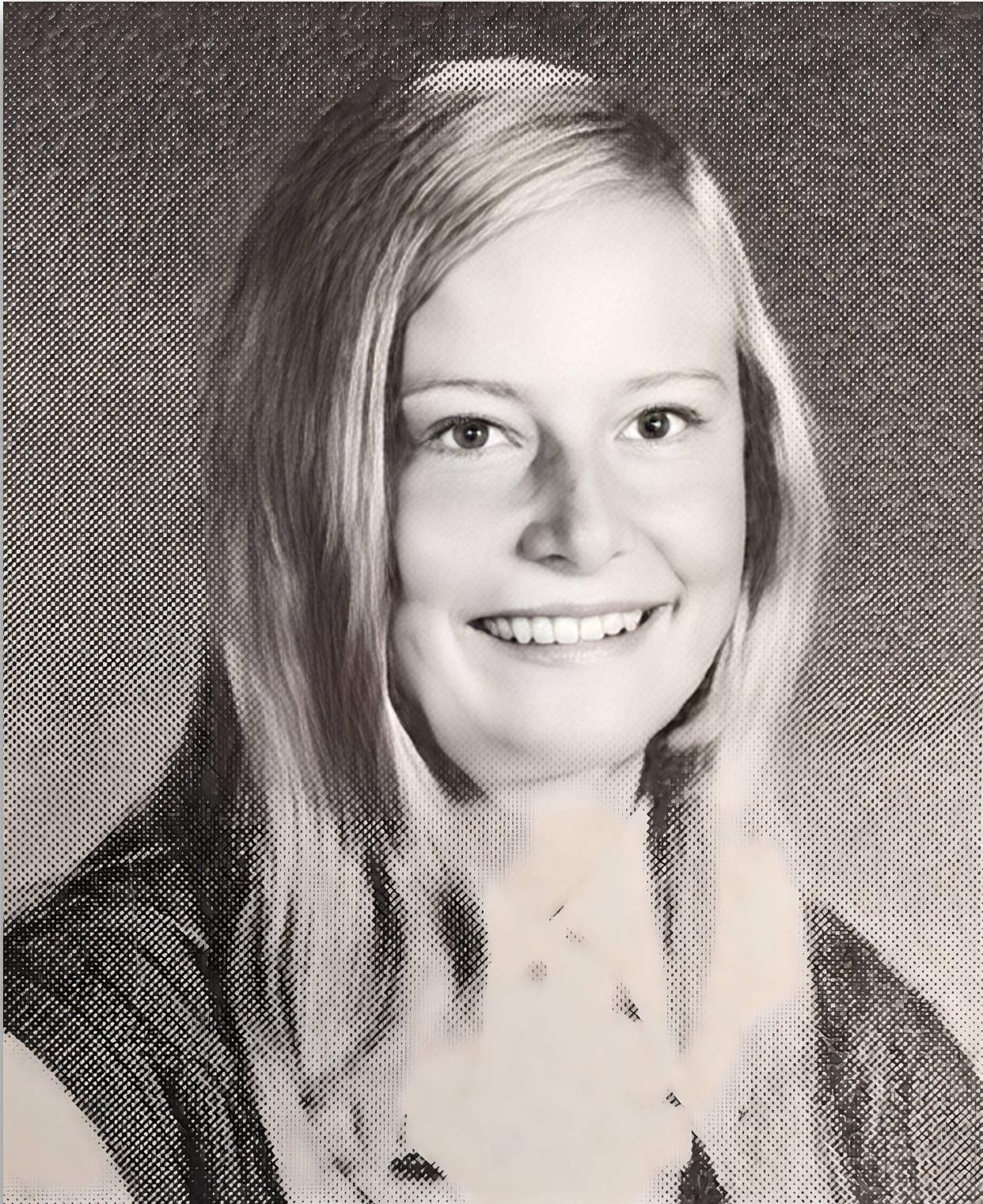
1968, 7th Grade
Orem Junior High

Debra Williams



1971, 9th Grade
Orem Junior High

Frankie Black
Participated in several
assemblies
Musician, Neat



Kelli Clegg



Taralyne Farley



1971, 9th Grade
Orem Junior High

Taralyne Farley
Library Assistant
Several Assemblies



Pam Blackley

Transcript of the Podcast, 7th Grade Gas Leak

Welcome, welcome, welcome to the deep dive, where we take a stack of fascinating sources, pull out the most compelling insights, and uh basically hand you a shortcut to being not just well informed, but deeply engaged and hopefully truly reflective.

Yeah.

Today, we're embarking on a journey back in time into a memory so vivid, so rich, it practically breathes the awkward um exhilarating and often bewildering air of early adolescence.

We're going to exp- explore how those incredibly formative years, that tumultuous period, can profoundly shape our understanding of ourselves and well, the world around us.

It's such a key time.

It really is a time of immense pressure, heightened emotions, and let's be honest, often pretty clumsy social navigation.

Definitely clumsy.

Our source material for this particular deep dive is a fantastic and remarkably candid personal reflection titled The Seventh Grade Gas Leak by Ron Leavitt.

Right.

And I promise you, while the title might make you, you know, chuckle a bit, this isn't just some funny anecdote designed for a quick laugh.

No, not at all.

This is a true memory packed with genuine adolescent awkwardness, moments the author himself describes as immature brilliance and that gut level visceral truth of what it really felt like to be 12 years old.

Yeah.

On the cusp of something entirely new and trying way way too hard to make a lasting mark.

It really captures that, doesn't it? That universal experience of just yearning for connection and belonging.

Exactly.

Through a deeply personal sometimes, yeah, excruciatingly relatable lens.

True.

And our mission today is to truly extract crucial uh universal insights from this very specific memory. We're going to dissect not just the story itself, but the specific era, September of 1968.

Mhm. The context is so important.

It really is. The unspoken rules, the societal structures that govern life back then, and the immense emotional landscape of a 12-year-old facing not just a new school environment, but also significant uh forced life changes,

right?

And yes, we absolutely will dive deep into what Ron calls the undeniable follies of young seventh graders.

Can't avoid that part.

No way. When we talk about the follies of youth or adolescent antics, we're really pinpointing that unique developmental stage where impulses often outpace judgment, you know.

Yeah. Where grand ambitions meet these really awkward realities.

Exactly. And where social navigation can feel like an unscripted, high stakes performance.

Totally.

What makes this story so poignant and what will truly explore is the inherent tension embedded right in this source. The confusion of an immature kid caught perpetually between wanting to be good and sometimes just desperately wanting to be cool.

Ah that tension that's the core of it isn't it?

It really is. It's a fine line that well most of us wrestled with at that age I think and this memory brings it to life with remarkable clarity and ultimately some profound lessons.

Okay, let's unpack this memory then. And we need to start not on the first day of junior high but actually much earlier at the beginning of what truly was a profound emotional upheaval for our narrator.

Right, the setup is key.

This story isn't just about his first day. It's rooted in a deeply impactful, forced move that completely uprooted this young boy's established life.

Mhm.

Imagine this. It's early June is 1967. The school year has just ended. He's finished fifth grade at Geneva Elementary in Oram, Utah.

Okay.

He's likely brimming with excitement for summer vacation. probably dreaming of endless days playing baseball or just hanging out with his friends.

The usual kid stuff.

Totally. When suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, his entire world is shaken. His family is moving from their home at 674 West Center Street to 340 Cypress Street in Midvale.

Wow. Okay. A big change.

And this wasn't a choice for him. As the source powerfully tells us, dad and mother had other plans. We were moving to Midvale, and nothing I said was going to change that.

O, that phrase Nothing I said was going to change that. That really hits home, doesn't it?

It really does. That visceral feeling of powerlessness a child experiences when major life altering decisions are made for them, regardless of their own desires or dreams.

Yeah. Their protests, their pleas, none of it matters.

Exactly. It's a fundamental loss of agency at an age when a child is just beginning to develop a sense of self and, you know, independence.

What's truly fascinating here is the concept of heartbreak from a 12-year-old's perspective,

right? It's different.

Totally. For an adult, heartbreak might instantly conjure images of, I don't know, a romantic relationship ending or maybe a major career setback.

Sure.

But for a pre-teen, particularly one on the cusp of adolescence, losing close friends, and a handful of childhood crushes, and Ron specifically names them, Janet Moss, Debbie Williams, Frankie Black, Kelli Klegg, Taralyne Farley, and especially the favorite girl, Pamela Blackley.

He remembers them all.

Yeah. Vividly. That isn't just a minor inconvenience. That is a monumental world-ending event. Absolutely.

At that tender age, these connections aren't merely social ties. They are the absolute entirety of your social world, the very fabric of your daily existence. Right.

The foundation of your identity really.

Exactly. And a primary source of your joy and validation. So to have that ripped away without a say, to feel those emotional roots just severed,

it's brutal.

It's a form of profound grief and loss that can deeply shape a child's early understanding of stability, control, and resilience. Or perhaps more acutely the lack thereof in their own lives.

Yeah.

It's a forced confrontation with external forces just totally beyond their control.

Absolutely. And it wasn't just the social circle that was fractured. The source vividly details the specific shattered dreams that accompanied this move.

Oh yeah, the sports dreams.

Right. He was brimming with excitement to play little league baseball that summer, already anticipating starting sixth grade at the junior high in Oram.

Mhm. Big steps.

Think about the psychological impact of that anticipation, the concrete plans he'd made, the entire vision he had for his immediate future, building on established friendships and this uh burgeoning athletic identity

and the coach's comment.

Yes, he'd even gone to a basketball camp at the junior high and the coach, a significant authority figure, had looked him right in the eye and said, "Ronnie, you're going to be a good basketball player." That single compliment, that bit of affirmation from an adult in a field he loved and excelled at meant everything to him. Of course it did.

It was a powerful validation, a glimpse into a promising athletic future that felt incredibly real and tangible. And then just like that, it was all gone.

Crushing.

It truly makes you consider the immense and often overlooked weight of parental decisions on a child's future at such a pivotal developmental age, especially when those decisions mean abandoning deeply held dreams in established social circles.

Yeah.

For you listening, how many Many of us have experienced something similar in our youth where a parents decision fundamentally altered our path, maybe crushed a dream we held dear, and we just had to accept it. Powerless to change the course,

right? That feeling of being uprooted at that age is a uniquely painful experience.

Definitely.

And as if that emotional blow wasn't enough, there was an additional almost insulting layer to this forced relocation.

Oh yeah, the school thing.

Exactly. Upon arriving in Midvale, he discovered a crucial difference in the educational system. Sixth graders in Midvil didn't go to junior high. They were still in elementary school.

Ouch. That must have felt like such a step backward.

Totally. This wasn't just a minor administrative difference or some geographical quirk for him. It felt like a significant step backward. A fundamental distinction in educational structure that hit hard.

He was ready for junior high,

right? He had been mentally prepared for junior high for that next step up. The locker, the new social dynamics, everything that signified progression. and growing up

and instead back to elementary.

Yeah. Essentially pushed back into what felt like a less advanced setting. It's like preparing for high school only to find out you have to repeat middle school because of a move.

Wow. Yeah.

The psychological impact of having those concrete dreams crushed coupled with the abruptness of being told nothing I said was going to change that meant grappling with a profound sense of powerlessness and an utterly altered trajectory for his academic and social life.

That sounds incredibly difficult.

Yet despite this heartbreak and perceived setback. The source notes that the individual eventually accepted the move and remarkably made the best of sixth grade in Midvail, even earning the nickname the fast one.

Huh. So, he adapted.

Yeah. This early sign of adaptability, this initial capacity to cope with adversity and find a way to thrive in a new environment. It sets an interesting almost hopeful contrast against the profound awkwardness and struggles he would face later.

Right. On that first day of seventh grade.

Exactly. showing ... if somewhat untested, resilience.

What's fascinating here is how this narrative pivots then from the pain of departure and the forced acceptance of a new normal to the momentous first day of seventh grade in September 1968.

A new chapter.

He had by this point come to terms with the move and even found a new identity as the fast one in elementary school. Now he was north of Elated to view elementary school in the rear view mirror.

Huh. Ready to move on?

Definitely. This was more than just a best start. It was a perceived liberation, a leap forward into a different, more grown-up world. Midvil Junior High.

His rookie year.

His rookie year of junior high. Yeah. A phrase that perfectly encapsulates that universal feeling of excitement and anticipation that comes with moving to a new, more independent phase of life, especially for a 12-year-old stepping onto a bigger stage.

Yeah, this was his chance to rewrite his narrative, maybe to finally move past the loss and embrace the future.

And it was indeed a fresh start. one that brimmed with both high hopes and as we'll soon discover, hidden fears and new social complexities.

He describes feeling confusion but no panic upon being assigned his very own locker. For us, a locker might seem like a small, mundane detail.

But it's huge at that age.

Exactly. For a seventh grader, that's a significant marker of progression, a tangible symbol of stepping into a more mature, independent phase of schooling.

It's a right of passage, a personal space,

right? A symbol of growing autonomy within the school system. But with that progression, of course, came new social dynamics, and he quickly observed the intimidating social hierarchy that governs junior high life.

Oh, yeah, the older kids.

He notes how the eighth and 9th graders stared me down with odd looks. Some appeared to rule by fear. I wondered if they were putting me on notice.

O, that paints such a vivid picture of the implicit power dynamics inherent in junior high.

Totally. That immediate sense of being the new small fish in a much larger pond, having to navigate spoken rules, subtle intimidation, veiled threats

from the seasoned veterans.

Exactly. Who had already mastered the social landscape. It's a primal testing ground for social acceptance and survival.

Faced with that chilly, almost threatening reception. The narrator made a personal vow that reveals so much about his developing character and his aspirations for himself.

What was that?

He shrugged off the chilly reception, promising myself I'd be nice to the timid seventh graders when I was older and a seasoned veteran of junior high. Hi.

Oh, that's actually quite sweet,

isn't it? This is an innocent, almost aspirational kindness, a desire to be benevolent and to pay it forward when he eventually held a position of power in this new social landscape,

which stands in such stark contrast to what happens later.

Exactly. It highlights that internal battle between his innate desire to be good and the burgeoning impulse to be cool.

Yeah.

He also harbored these far-reaching ambitions which he described as simple, reasonable, to me anyway.

Okay. Like what

these included getting good grades, learning what he needed to keep mother and dad happy, a clear sign of his desire for approval and security.

Mhm. Standard kid goals,

right? Laying eyes on the pretty girls, and crucially playing sports. These were the core motivations for a 12-year-old in 1968. The driving forces behind his engagement with this new intimidating environment.

And central to all of those aspirations was the dream, right? The big dream, which was tied intimately to sport.

Oh yeah. He saw junior high as his ticket, a means to an end to make it to the show. The big leagues, Major League Baseball, the NBA, the NFL, any of them, all of them.

Wow. Ambitious.

Totally. Though he admits, "My heart tilted toward baseball."

Okay.

This wasn't just a passing fancy. It was a deeply ingrained identity. He acknowledges his skills were in need of scads of work, a moment of self-awareness,

which is good.

But he immediately emphasizes that he had the drive times 10, the ambition, the commitment. That unwavering belief in his potential despite his current skill level, that boundless optimism, it's so quintessentially adolescent, isn't it?

It really is. That blueprint for a future self, the driving force behind so much early behavior and aspiration. It truly sets the backdrop for a story of grand ambition meeting a surprisingly awkward and well, let's just say unglamorous reality.

Yeah. For you listening, how many of us had those grand maybe unrealistic dreams? in our youth.

Oh, absolutely.

Whether it was becoming an astronaut, a rock star, a pro athlete, or even just the most popular kid in school,

those dreams felt absolutely central to our identity, didn't they?

They really did. They shaped our immediate goals and often drove our early attempts at making a mark.

Here's where it gets really interesting, though, and where the rule-bound tension of the era truly comes into play, setting the stage for the specific cultural backdrop of 1968.

Okay, the rules.

We're delving into the specific, often rigid rules of the 1960s. especially concerning school attire. And the narrator's immediate reaction sums it up perfectly, expressing a common frustration of the time. No t-shirts, no shorts. Are you kidding me?

Huh? Yeah, that sounds about right for the era. This wasn't just about fashion or comfort. It was about strict conformity, respect for authority,

and this pervasive societal emphasis on order that permeated school environments.

Absolutely. The source goes into vivid detail about the highly gender specific rules which were incredibly and meticulously enforced

like for the girls.

For the girls, including his older sisters, it was a non-negotiable requirement to wear a dress or skirt to their knees.

To their knees? Wow.

And to ensure compliance, there was even a tangible, almost ritualistic dress to floor on their knees test for verification.

You're kidding. A test.

No joke. This highlights the almost meticulous level of control exerted over students appearances, reflecting a broader societal expectation of propriety and modesty for young women in that era.

That's int. What's truly fascinating though is how young people even within such rigid structures found subtle ingenious ways to push boundaries and express a nent sense of individuality.

How so?

The text notes that rebellion among girls meant rolling the waistband of their skirt to raise the hem just an inch above the knees. That was as bold as it got.

And finch. That was rebellion.

That was it. This wasn't overt defiance. It was a quiet, almost imperceptible act of self-expression. A whisper of individuality within a very constrained environment.

Wow. It shows how even small acts of personal agency could feel significant. Then

a tiny victory in a world governed by adult rules.

And for the boys, it was just as strict, maybe even more so in its stark simplicity.

Shirts had to be tucked in. No exceptions.

No exceptions ever.

That enforcement wasn't lenient or subject to debate. These weren't just school rules to be taken lightly. They were confluence of authority. Mother's rules, dad's orders, Jordan school district policy.

Layer upon layer of rules.

Exactly. There was, as Ron put it, no escaping the dress code police. Not at home, not at church, and definitely not at school.

Wow.

This speaks volumes about a broader cultural emphasis on neatness, conformity, and unquestioning respect for authority that permeated every aspect of a young person's life in that specific era.

It truly was, as our outline suggests, an iron cage of a dress code designed to shave not just outward appearance, but by extension, behavior, and attitude.

And yet, within this symbolic iron cage, there were still subtle, almost unconscious ways for a 12-year-old boy to find personal pride and express a subtle sense of self, right, to mark his presence even within the confines of the rules.

Yeah. Like with his shoes, our narrator wore base, those iconic penny loafers in Cordovan and color. A and his dedication to their appearance was truly remarkable. I spit-shine those shoes so thoroughly. The US Army would approve nearly every day. I gave them a fresh coat of polish.

Makes dedication.

This isn't just about adhering to a rule. It's about taking ownership, finding pride in presentation, a subtle form of quiet excellence and personal expression within the mandated uniform,

creating a personal statement within a uniform world.

Exactly.

And the Bass-Weeguns also came with a fascinating almost whimsical penny loafer paradox unique to that era.

Oh yeah, the money in the shoes,

right? Most kids traditionally put pennies in the slot. Right. Not our narrator. He admits he was too cheap for pennies, preferring to be more financially shrewd. So, he inserted dimes instead.

Huh. Practical.

And he found them to be the perfect place to stash emergency money. What's even better and give such a window into young mind is his explanation. By seventh grade, pennies no longer pack the same punch they had back in fifth and sixth.

Inflation hitting the penny loafer market

apparently. But if he was flushed with dough, if he had some extra cash, you go big quarters. Yeah,

50 cents in my loafers made me feel like a young tycoon.

50 cents a tycoon. That's brilliant.

It offers such a specific, delightful glimpse into the evolving value of money for a 12-year-old in 1968 and his early, playful understanding of personal finance and subtle flexes of perceived wealth or status.

It's such a unique and charming detail that brings the era to life, showing how even a simple school uniform could become a canvas for personal expression and yeah, a hint of future entrepreneurial spirit.

And then there was the classic sock standoff with Mr. Thomson, the hard-nosed vice principal who epitomized the rigid enforcement of school rules.

Ah, Mr. Thomson, the sock enforcer.

Exactly. Mr. Thomson insisted on socks, a rule which the narrator, ever seeking to be cool, found unreasonable. Yeah. He thought the sock-free loafer look was sharp, cool, advanced,

trying to push the boundaries again, that early adolescent urge to differentiate oneself,

right? But ultimately, he gave in, making a pragmatic decision that bare ankles could wait until high school.

Smart move. Probably this illustrates a sophisticated, albeit understanding of when to conform to avoid immediate trouble

and when to save the rebellion for later.

Exactly. When the stakes might be different. It highlights that constant internal negotiation between wanting to be good and wanting to be cool, especially when faced with direct unyielding authority.

It's a developmental phase of testing limits and learning social consequences.

So, if we connect this to the bigger picture of the narrator's general disposition regarding rule-breaking. It deeply sets up the surprising events to come.

How so?

He explicitly states, "Truth is, I didn't have the guts or the disposition for junior high mischief. Not really."

Okay, so not a natural troublemaker.

Not at all. This isn't a kid who actively sought trouble or reveled in rule-breaking. His reasoning was quite pragmatic and self-preservation oriented. I hated getting whipped. I saw no reason to invite pain into my life.

Never sense. Avoid the pain.

This pragmatic fear of consequences. This aversion to inviting pain is a fundamental almost defining aspect of his personality at this point in his life. It paints a clear picture of a kid who generally played by the rules, who understood and respected authority, even if he didn't always agree with them internally.

He was by all accounts a relatively compliant, well-behaved young man, shaped by his upbringing and a clear understanding of boundaries.

And this established disposition, this self-proclaimed aversion to mischief makes the crucial turning point even more impactful and intriguing,

right? Because he immediately follows that statement with

until my first day of seventh grade.

Exactly. That single phrase, hanging there, foreshadows a complete and dramatic shift in his behavior, a profound departure from his usual cautious disposition.

It builds this incredible anticipation for what could possibly cause such a fundamental shift in a person's established character.

Right? To transform a generally rule-abiding consequence kid into someone capable of what he calls immature brilliance and socially reckless behavior

all on one single momentous day.

It leaves you, the listener, wondering what external forces, what internal pressures, what unique combination of circumstances could lead to such a dramatic change in behavior for a 12-year-old boy trying desperately to navigate his new world and establish his place within it.

It's a classic setup for a story about how circumstances can push even the most cautious individuals beyond their perceived limits.

Definitely.

So, we've meticulously set the stage. A new school, unfamiliar rules, an already emotional journey of forced relocation, and a kid who up until this point mostly played it safe and avoided trouble.

The calm before the storm.

Exactly. Now, let's dive into the core of the story, the chaotic, comedic, and ultimately pivotal turning point. The seventh grade gas leak.

Here we go.

And it all begins, as many bodily rebellions do, with a seemingly innocuous school lunch. The source tells us with an almost sympathetic tone, "My 15 cent school lunch did not sit well with anyone."

15 cents. Wow. And the culprit,

specifically, the culprit was a couple of tacos.

Ah, the dreaded school tacos.

Imagine that. A simple, cheap everyday school lunch igniting a chain reaction of physiological distress and, as we'll see, profound social chaos.

The mundane and citing the memorable.

Totally. The in-depth analysis of the physical discomfort he describes is truly vivid. And well, for anyone who's ever had an upset stomach, deeply relatable.

Oh yeah.

He recounts his stomach turning lumpy and sour like something was chewing me from the inside out. And his gut was rumbling like distant thunder.

Been there. And it wasn't just him either.

No, this was a collective experience. The whole crew of us was gassy and miserable.

Misery loves company. I guess this sets a truly uncomfortable yet comically relatable scene. A shared bodily rebellion among a group of boys. What's particularly endearing though and truly highlights the follies of young seventh graders is his naive belief deeply ingrained from his older sisters Bonnie and Janet

right about girls

who had always sworn up and down that girls didn't toot.

Oh my gosh.

He says that made no sense to me but they were my big sisters and they never lied. I believed every word.

Wow. That underscores his profound trust and belief in his sisters as primary authorities on the world especially the mysterious world of girls.

Even when basic logic might suggest otherwise. Totally. He genuinely sometimes wondered how girls handled their airlike substances. Had Heavenly Father outfitted the superior gender with built-in gas silencers.

Built-in gas silencers. That's amazing.

This blend of childlike innocence combined with his unquestioning faith in his sister's pronouncements truly emphasizes the charming yet often comical misconceptions that can define early adolescence, particularly when it comes to the opposite sex.

That unwavering trust in his older sisters is such a crucial and tender element to his character at this age. They are his unquestioned arbiters of truth, even when the truth is biologically suspect.

Absolutely.

So, the scene is set. It's 7th period social studies with Mr. Sumbott. The classroom is located upstairs in C Wing.

Okay.

And the walk there, perhaps made longer by his discomfort, felt like a hike to West Jordan, emphasizing the sheer size and newness of the school environment. A maze for a rookie seventh grader.

Right.

He's surrounded by his familiar circle of friends. Tracy Goris, Richard Cuz and David Fritz who significantly were also fellow deacons from the Midvale First Ward.

Ah, so a shared background there too, underscoring their shared social, religious, and perhaps even moral upbringing.

Exactly. And then a new captivating variable enters the equation. A girl he didn't recognize who had transferred in from East Midvale.

The new girl, Susan.

Yes, Susan. She had brunette hair, violet eyes, and she sat on the front row. He immediately and instinctively He thought she was kind of an Eiffel.

Uh-oh.

Twice she caught him staring. That clumsy, unmistakable, gaze of a pre-teen crush. And both times he looked away, confused by her beauty.

Awkward. This new crush, this immediate fascination sets up the powerful, albeit misguided, motivation for the folly that's about to unfold.

He's now trying to balance intense physical discomfort with a desperate, if unrefined, desire to impress.

The stage is perfectly primed for a moment of either triumph or utter disaster.

And Then came the seemingly minor but utterly consequential seating dilemma. Not enough desks. True to his upbringing and reflecting his earlier vow to be nice, Ron notes that dad had always taught me to be a gentleman. So he chivalrously gave his desk up to a girl, or as he corrects himself, a lady

gentleman Ron.

His friends, following his lead, also gave up their seats. An act of collective gallantry that ironically places them in the perfect and most precarious position for what's to come.

Perched on the waist high bookshelves along the back windows.

Exactly. And then the perfect storm truly forms. A convergence of factors that would make for an unforgettable first day. Mr. Sumbott took role and then for some baffling reason he left the room to find more desks,

leaving us unsupervised. The fatal mistake.

Totally. This lapse in adult supervision combined with the extreme physical discomfort from the taco lunch and the potent overwhelming presence of a new crush he desperately wanted to impress.

It created the ideal explosive and frankly inevitable environment for immature brilliance to manifest.

It really raises an important question for us. What truly happens when a powerful, deeply felt desire to impress and belong combines with intense physical discomfort and a complete unexpected lapse in external supervision.

The answer, as Ron's story reveals, can be both profoundly regrettable and absurdly comical. What happens, as the narrative vividly lays out, is precisely the infamous gas leak,

the main event.

Our narrator describes the internal struggle perfectly, setting up the decision. Something was trying to tear its way out of my insides. I tried holding it in, but then two golden opportunities presented themselves. One for comedy and one to impress Susan.

Oh boy. This is the pivotal moment where the desire for cool and social validation combined with the promise of comedy overrides his usual disposition and pragmatic fear of consequences.

He made the fateful decision to let it go, hoping for a silent one. It wasn't.

Oh no.

The description is so vivid, so visceral that you can almost feel it. The explosion echoed off the bookshelf. I felt the vibration in my spine.

Wow. That graphic detail powerfully underscores the dramatic, undeniable, and utterly public impact of his decision. It was not just a sound. It was a physical event that resonated through the room.

And the immediate reaction from the rest of the class was exactly what you'd expect from a room full of uninhibited seventh graders. The whole class went silent, then erupted in laughter.

Predictable. Everyone, that is except Susan.

Ah, Susan. Her response was absolutely devastating. A crushing blow to his carefully constructed, if ill-conceived, plan to impress her.

What did she do?

She shot me a glare through her black rimmed glasses that could have stopped a freight train. You're sick, she spat like I was a piece of gum on the bottom of her shoe.

Ouch. That is the ultimate crushing failure of his attempt to be cool. Instead of impressing her, he's earned her uttered disgust, branding himself as dog dirt. Yeah, his internal conflict in that moment is palpable and deeply relatable. Definitely not the reaction I was hoping for. I was torn between pride and shame. I felt like a flop noodle. I wish the floor would swallow me up.

That perfectly captures the profound shame I deserve for our crass behavior. He mentions a deep immediate regret for his social misstep. He had sought connection and to be noticed, but this was certainly not the way he intended to make his mark.

And in a truly poignant moment, reflecting on his absolute faith in his sisters, he thinks Bonnie and Janet had never warned me girls might not appreciate a good fart joke.

Oh my goodness. That again highlights his deep, almost unwavering trust in his sisters as his primary sources of truth about girls and social dynamics

and their unintentional yet profound failure to prepare him for this very specific, utterly humiliating social landmine.

That unshakable belief in them, even in the face of contradictory evidence, is a recurring, endearing, and sometimes comical theme of his 12-year-old mind. really is.

But his solo act quickly ignited a chain reaction, proving that immature brilliance can be contagious, leading to a full-blown folly of young seventh graders moment.

Yeah, it wasn't just him for long. The source says, "Then Tracy let one rip a sound like a blown tire."

Oh man, imagine that sound reverberating through the now alert classroom.

The room lost it. And not to be outdone, his friend Richard, clearly unwilling to be left out of this moment of gassy glory, didn't want to miss out, so he squeezed out a thick one that smelled like death. Gh. smelled like death.

The atmosphere quickly devolved from shocked silence to immediate visceral pure chaos, laughter, gagging, triumph. They had, as the narrator so eloquently puts it, broken the intestinal ice, shattering any remaining decor.

Broken the intestinal ice, that's one way to put it.

And from there, it truly became an unhinged contest, a collective, almost primal adolescent free-for-all.

A contest.

The whole class joined in like it was a contest. Who could honk the loudest, the longest. It became a symphony of one tutor after another.

Symphony. Oh, the humanity.

This vivid description captures the uninhibited, almost primal nature of adolescent group behavior. When inhibitions are dropped, when the social rules are suspended, and when a leader in crude mischief sets a new bizarre standard,

it's a collective rebellion against discomfort, against boredom, and against any lingering sense of propriety or adult expectation.

Exactly. Even Susan, despite her initial strong and disgusted reaction, was now plugging her nose, whining, "You guys are gross."

But even she couldn't escape it. Her initial outrage had given way to a defensive act against the sheer overwhelming reality of the situation.

Pretty much. But for the boys, in their collective moment of defiant, gassy glory, they were clearly having the time of our lives avenging our stomachs on the taco gods.

Avenging their stomachs on the taco gods. It's that perfect storm of shared misery transforming into shared bravado, a release of tension. that manifests in a truly unforgettable display of youthful irreverence.

So, what does this all mean when reality in the form of an exasperated adult abruptly re-enters the picture,

right? The teacher returns. The moment of shared crude triumph was shattered with an almost cinematic abruptness.

Then disaster. Mr. Sumbott walked back in. Imagine the scene.

Yeah.

He literally stepped right into the brown cloud.

Oh no, the brown cloud.

The immediate physical reaction is vividly described. He paused, sniffed, gagged. This imagery is so visceral and comical, perfectly encapsulating the shock and utter disbelief of the adult in the face of such a chaotic, odorous classroom.

His scholarly composure, likely hard one, simply crumbled in the face of the unadulterated reality completely. You can almost hear the indignation rising in his voice. "What is going on here?" he bellowed, peering over his glasses, scratching his bald head in disbelief.

His scholarly composure, which must have been considerable for a social studies teacher in 1968, completely crumbled under the weight of the invisible yet potent affront.

He tried to alleviate the situation, opening a few windows, but it was too late. We were already past the point of no return.

Too late indeed. The ejections from the classroom began swiftly and decisively.

Yep. Tracy, the first to follow Ron's lead, launched a massive one, and he was immediately kicked out.

Boom. Gone.

David, emboldened by the chaos, followed with a duck call blast, and he too was booted right out the door.

A duck call. Wow. How he goes.

Richard completed The trio of co-conspirators dropped a low rolling thunder and out he went as well.

Rolling thunder. The consequences were swift, direct, and undeniable. And then came the ultimate social denouncement.

The nail in the coffin of our narrator's attempt to be cool. A moment of public betrayal from the very person he sought to impress.

Susan points the finger.

"He started it," Susan announced, pointing at me like I was a war criminal.

"Ouch." The object of his immature attempt at impression now turns on him, sealing his public shame. Brutal.

As Mr. Sumbott, his patience clearly exhausted, marched the narrator toward the door, Ron made a truly desperate and poignant plea, appealing to the only authority he knew might still protect him.

His sister's reputation.

Exactly. A shield forged from his family's revelation. But but Mr. Sumbott Bonnie and Janet Leavitt are my big sisters.

Oh, bless his heart. This is a profound highlight of his trust and belief in his older sister's impeccable reputation, a childlike conviction that their good behavior and standing might somehow act as a shield,

granting him a degree of immunity for his own transgression. He genuinely thought invoking their names would carry significant weight and perhaps even sway Mr. Sumbott.

But the teacher was not swayed. His rejection was swift, absolute, and utterly dismissive of Ron's desperate logic. I don't care. Your sisters are well behaved. They'd never stink up my classroom.

The reputation of his beloved sisters for the first time provided no protection.

And this leads to arguably the most fantastic and most telling part of this entire follies of young seventh graders moment,

the narrator's ultimate unshakable defense.

Right in the face of undeniable, overwhelming evidence and adult authority, he clung to the truth imparted by his beloved sisters. A truth so firmly held it transcended empirical data.

What did he say

as he was being ushered out? He shouted, "Well, that's only because they can't. They told me girls can't toot."

No, he actually said that.

He did. This reveals the absolute unshakable and almost heartbreakingly trusting trust he had in his sisters, even when logic, immediate sensory evidence, and the very words of an angry adult directly contradicted it.

It's truly a testament to the profound influence of older siblings on a 12-year-old's worldview, and how a firmly held belief, even if biologically inaccurate, can persist, despite all empirical data, all social proof.

It's the ultimate example of youthful gullibility colliding with crude reality. Mr. Sumbott, understandably, and perhaps mercifully, was not buying it. Not that day.

I can imagine the moment for him was simply too absurd to entertain further debate.

And the final bizarre turn of events truly solidifies the follies of that day and introduces a surprising element of shared human reaction. A moment of unexpected empathy.

What happened next?

So there they sat, our narrator, Tracy, Richard, and David in the second floor hallway, expelled for cutting the cheese in class, still likely reeling from the chaos and anticipating further punishment,

waiting for the final judgment.

And then Mr. Thomson, the hard-nosed vice principal with his formidable permanent scowl appeared, a figure of strict authority.

Oh, great. The VP.

He immediately zeroed in on them, his scowl deepening as he demanded, "What are you boys doing out of class?" Our narrator, perhaps hoping to spare himself and his friends further humiliation or simply embarrassed, swallowed and offered a weak, perhaps hopeful reply. "You don't want to know, sir."

Trying to play it cool. Probably not the best strategy with Mr. Thomson?

Probably not. But Thomson, perhaps sensing something genuinely unusual in their reticence, insisted, which led to the ultimate ironic twist.

What did he say?

He didn't laugh. He stared. What did you do? What's so funny? Out with it.

Uh-oh. As the narrator notes, with understated comedic timing, this was the wrong choice of words.

Completely wrong. The moment the question was posed, the dam broke one last time. A final collective release of tension and lingering gas. All four of us erupted again. Our last bits of gas squeezed out as we burst into uncontrollable laughter.

They couldn't hold it in. The grand finale of the gas leak. An almost involuntary physical response to the absurdity and relief of the situation.

And then in a truly unexpected and memorable moment that defies expectation, something remarkable happened.

What did Thomson lose? It

even Mr. Thomson cracked. His face turned red. And then he was laughing, too.

No way. The hard-nosed VP.

Yes. There we were rolling in the hallway. A bunch of seventh grade boys completely unhinged and the formidable vice principal laughing right along with us.

That's incredible. This surprising moment of shared, albeit crude, human reaction provides such a memorable and almost redemptive end to the immediate incident,

showing that even the most hard-nosed authority figures can sometimes be overcome by the sheer, absurd, and undeniable comedy of youth.

It's a moment of pure, unadulterated follies of young seventh graders, a bond formed in shared embarrassment and unexpected mirth. Now, let's shift to the lasting impact of this immature experience and the palpable shame that lingered for our narrator. A shame that, as he states, he truly deserves,

right? The aftermath.

That very night, likely still processing the day's events while doing his homework, the narrator made what he describes as an easy decision. Susan wasn't nearly as cute as I'd thought.

Huh. Sour grapes. That is such a classic, deeply relatable coping mechanism for rejection and profound embarrassment, isn't it?

Totally. It's a swift psychological maneuver to reclaim some pride and diminish the sting of failure. If the object of your desire is no longer desirable, then your failure to impress them and their subsequent disgust doesn't hurt as much.

It's a fundamental cognitive distortion, a way the mind protects the ego from significant social blows, quickly devaluing the source of discomfort.

But beyond that immediate, understandable, almost childish reaction, the story delves into a much deeper, more mature self-reflection. a profound question that many of us grapple with about our own youthful missteps.

What's the question?

He asks. I don't know why I acted like that. Why I was so crude, immature, and socially reckless on my first day of junior high.

That's a heavy question for a 12-year-old to ask himself even later.

It is. While acknowledging maybe it was just the follies of youth, which is a common, almost dismissive explanation, he suggests it was deeper than that. I wanted connection. I wanted to be noticed, to belong, to matter.

Ah, that really gets to the part of the underlying universal psychosocial needs that often drive adolescent crash behavior or tactless attempts at connection.

Exactly. It wasn't just about making a bad joke for its own sake. It was about a desperate, if clumsy and unrefined, attempt to make a mark in a new intimidating social environment, to find his place within the pecking order, to secure a sense of belonging.

He then acknowledges his failure, stating with remarkable self-awareness, "Civility asked more of me than and I gave that day

that highlights the profound self-awareness gained through the experience, a recognition of how his behavior fell short of a higher standard of social grace.

And it's crucial to remember the context of his age. I had just turned 12 three short months earlier.

Right? This provides crucial developmental context for understanding why a child, even one usually averse to mischief, might behave in such a reckless, uncalculated way when faced with intense social pressures, a burgeoning sense of identity, and an over common desire to belong.

He's navigating a complex emotional landscape with very limited and untested social tools.

And the most striking part of the long-term ripple effects and a testament to the indelible mark of crass behavior is the unforgettable Susan.

Oh yeah, what happened with Susan?

The source tells us with an almost chilling certainty that Susan Thompson never seemed to forget my crass behavior from that infamous first day of seventh grade back in 1968.

Never forgot. Wow. Think about that. This wasn't a fleeting encounter.

Not at all. They were classmates at Midvale Junior High through 7th, 8th, and 9th grade, enduring years of daily proximity.

Three years.

And then, compounding this extended exposure, they both attended Hillcrest High School from sophomore through senior year.

That's another three years, a staggering six full years of shared classes, shared friends, passing each other in the hallways every single day,

eating lunch in the same cafeteria, parking in the same lot, and even singing in the same choirs.

And yet, through all that time, time. Ron recounts that not once did she smile at me. At best, she tolerated me.

Wow, that truly illustrates the enduring, almost calcified mark of an initial negative impression, especially formed during the highly impressionable years of adolescence.

Every time our eyes met, she gave me that same look she'd given me in Mr. Sumbott's classroom. I was still dog dirt.

Dog dirt for six years. This story powerfully demonstrates how a single immature moment, a moment of pre-teen blunders, and echo through years.

Even a significant portion of one's adolescence

shaking perceptions and social dynamics in incredibly lasting ways, a silent, persistent judgment that cannot be erased.

Despite that lingering shadow from Susan, that persistent reminder of his adolescent antics, the narrator continued marching through life like an unstoppable machine.

Good for him. That speaks to a remarkable underlying resilience, an ability to persevere despite past mistakes and social setbacks.

His evolving goals were clear. If still rooted in youthful ambition. All I wanted was to be happy. Okay, I'll admit it. Happy and a ball player.

Still holding on to the dream. The pursuit of happiness for him wasn't always easy or automatic. He learned that sometimes happiness found me, but most of the time I had to chase it down.

That active pursuit led him to a profound realization and a conscious path toward gratitude, turning youthful folly into wisdom.

How so?

He started by looking around for the blessings that were already mine. And when I found them. I tried to be grateful. I thanked Heavenly Father. I did my best to show appreciation for every single day, no matter how flawed or foolish it had been.

That's a beautiful transformation. This reflective journey from the shame and embarrassment of a crude act to finding appreciation for life's blessings is a testament to growth, maturity, and a deliberate cultivation of an optimistic outlook.

He concludes this powerful reflection with the ultimate importance of faith. Faith in God, faith in his church, faith in a better tomorrow. Mhm.

This story shows us how a single moment of immaturity can indeed echo through years, leaving a persistent mark, but also how reflection, self-awareness, and a deliberate search for gratitude can ultimately shape a person's path forward.

Transforming youthful follies into profound foundational life lessons that inform one's entire perspective.

What a journey we took through this deep dive. Seriously, from the heartbreak of leaving friends and childhood crushes behind in Orem,

right back at the beginning to navigating the structures of a rigid 1960s junior high dress code and ultimately to that unforgettable, absurd, and deeply human moment of crude adolescent chaos that had surprisingly long-lasting consequences with Susan.

It really did. It's a powerful reminder of the raw vulnerability and complex desires of youth. How desperately we wanted to belong to make a mark

and the awkward sometimes disastrous ways we sometimes try to achieve it.

Yeah. This story encapsulates the chaotic beauty of growing up where every misstep becomes a stepping stone hopefully.

Hopefully.

And it leaves us with a truly thought-provoking question for you, our listener, to mull over. How do our earliest, perhaps most embarrassing attempts to belong or be noticed, those often clumsy, unrefined moments of social navigation during our formative years, shape the way we approach social interactions, risk-taking, and self-acceptance for years to come?

That's a deep one.

And how do we ultimately reconcile those unforgettable follies of youth with the complex, reflective, and often wiser people we eventually become, recognizing that even our most regrettable moments contribute to the tapestry of who we are.

Thank you for joining us on this deep dive. We hope it sparked new insights and perhaps a moment of reflection on your own journey through adolescence and the lasting impressions, for better or worse, that those formative years left on you.