

# Of gullible train passengers and court officials

Admittedly, 1910 was a simpler time. Though some individuals may have thought they were relatively sophisticated, there were a couple of instances when people in authority were blind-sided.

Cases in point: A boy who could have gotten an Academy Award for his neediness and a female whose first performance left the police shaking their heads.

The headline on the (Bloomington) *Daily Telephone* of Feb. 26, 1910, said, "\$2 BUNCO GAME WORKED BY BOY." The youngster got on the train at Lafayette and was duly asked by the conductor for his ticket.

The boy, who said he was on his way from "somewhere in Illinois to Bloomington," rummaged through his pockets, looking for the ticket. According to the *Telephone*, "He immediately claimed that the ticket was a through ticket and had not been returned to him by the first conductor he had given it to."

The reaction from the conductor was inevitable. Find the ticket or get off the train.

Seemingly unfazed by the ultimatum, the boy searched for several minutes going the



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

entire length of the train and telling most everyone on the train that his ticket had not been returned to him and that he had no money to pay his fare on to Bloomington."

There was a gullible passenger on his way to Crawfordsville. After hearing the boy's story, the passenger decided to trust the boy with a \$2 loan. Exit the passenger at Crawfordsville.

Step three in the boy's strategy was to pay for a ticket to Bloomington, requesting a receipt for the money. Immediately after the passenger who had loaned the money got off at Crawfordsville, the boy suddenly found the lost ticket and requested a refund.

Concluded the *Telephone*, "The conductor as well as many of the passengers are confident that the whole thing had been nothing

more or less than a 'hold-up.'"

Then there was the Bloomington woman, Mrs. Ed Orey, who had been accused of exerting undue influence upon the conduct of Miss Cora Shively, who was under the age of 16.

Cora's father, John Shively, accused Orey of inducing Cora to "frequently absent herself from home and to be on the streets a great deal." A court hearing to hear all sides of the case was held on Feb. 17, 1910. Orey was represented by attorney E.E. McFerren.

The charge was contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Orey was found guilty and sentenced to 60 days in the Monroe County Jail.

McFerren thought a request for parole was in order and asked for the opportunity to talk to Orey in the privacy of his office. Mr. and Mrs. Orey, Cora Shively and the sheriff went to McFerren's office where a private conversation between attorney and client did actually take place in a side room.

The *Telephone* explained to its readers what happened afterward. "Mrs. Orey asked that the Shively girl be allowed to come in the

room and help her pin up her dress which had been torn in ascending the stairs to the McFerren office."

Ten minutes went by, and the sheriff became uneasy. Opening the door to the side office, he discovered that, as the newspaper put it, "the bird had flown."

There was an outside door to the side office. Mrs. Orey had put on a hat, veil and Cora's military cape and made her escape.

With egg on their faces, the lawmen fanned out to look for Mrs. Orey, but at press time of the *Telephone* had not located the escapee. The "dragnet" included a "stakeout" at the train stations, but the deputies believed that the woman was still in town somewhere.

Naturally, there were some consequences for others. Concluded the *Telephone*, "This morning the Shively girl and her sister, Sarah, were taken to the jail and cross-questioned, but the sheriff gained no information from them. The young Shively girl is to be tried on a charge of assisting Mrs. Orey to escape."

H-T 9/8/98