

The \$700 Parking Ticket

The year was 1976. I'm a NYC Taxi Driver. At that time I was sharing a Taxi with another driver, Bob. Bob would work the day shift and I would work the night shift. Bob's home was in The Bronx and I was living in Brooklyn. I also had residence in upstate NY. I would spend several days there each week when I wasn't driving.

Bob and I would meet at 4 PM each day on the corner of W 21st street and 7th avenue in Manhattan. I owned a V W Rabbit. Each day when we met I would park my car and Bob and I would chat for a few minutes with Bob still at the wheel of the taxi while I would sit on the passenger side. Afterwards Bob would take my car home to where he lived in the Bronx and I would go to work driving the taxi for the night shift. After my shift was done, I would go pick up my car in the Bronx and drive my car to Brooklyn. For this reason we both had keys to both vehicles.

One afternoon Bob and I were sitting and talking. I was not aware that the parking meter that my car was parked at had run out of time. Suddenly I see a police officer on foot walk over to my car and begin to write a parking ticket. This disturbed me. I could not afford this and I wanted to stop this from happening.

I told Bob to follow me. I was going to jump in my car and drive away before the officer could place the ticket on the car. I opened the door of my car, started the engine. The police officer said "You can't do that". I replied "Yes I can" and proceeded to drive south on 7th Ave.

I looked in the rear view mirror and saw the police officer commandeer a laundry truck. They were chasing me down 7th ave while unbeknown to the cop the laundry truck was being followed by the taxi cab.

I was trying to get away. In doing so I made a left turn onto 14th street, a big mistake! I ran into gridlock and soon after the policeman had caught up with me. The first thing he did was reach into my car and take my keys. Then he dragged me out of the car and while I was trying to apologize, he told me "You're under arrest". A crowd of people was witnessing this from the street and Bob, who the police officer was unaware of, pulled up and started to shake the officer saying that he should leave me alone. He shouted "Leave him alone, he didn't do anything". Now, to top things off, a young man from the crowd walked over with a

rolled up newspaper and smacked the cop on the side of the head. The cop and I looked at each other in disbelief. Then, the police officer knowing he had my keys and I wasn't going anywhere took off running after the man who hit him with the newspaper. Next, I turned to Bob and said: "Give me the key to the Rabbit". He did and we both took off and got lost from all this. As we were driving away there was a round of applause from those people that were watching.

So, was I free? No way! They had my license plate number and with that information, two weeks later, while I was at my upstate residence, the phone rang! Barbara, who was my roommate at that time answered. I heard her say, he's not here now. And, I knew from this that they had caught up with me.

The detective who called left his phone number. I immediately called him back. I told him that I was the person that he was looking for and offered my apology. He told me that I should surrender myself and that I was being charged with attempted murder of a police officer. I told him that I had no intention of hurting the officer and I didn't think this was the appropriate charge. He asked me to surrender, and be at his place the next morning.

I immediately phone a friend, who put me in touch with a lawyer. He told me not to surrender and that he would deal with the police. The lawyer contacted another lawyer in Brooklyn who took over and arranged for my surrender.

I surrendered the following morning, spent one day behind bars waiting to be arraigned before a judge and went to court the next day. After surrendering I met the police officer who was involved. I told him I was wrong to do what I did and that I meant him no harm. I asked why I was being charged with such a serious crime. He said because they knew that the judge would lessen the charge.

And, he did. My lawyer was able to bargain that I plead guilty to Disorderly Conduct. I did and was fined \$250. The lawyer's fee was \$425 and of course \$25, for the parking ticket! A \$700 parking ticket

As a foot note I have to say this: I asked what happened to my keys that the officer took. They told me where to get them and gave me a file number. They were returned. However, missing from the key chain were 2 gold wedding rings that I had been carrying since a recent divorce from my wife. So, I ask. WHO WAS THE CRIMINAL? Also, I found out that the young man who hit the cop with the newspaper was arrested and fined what was a week pay on his job.