



THE REAL ADVENTURES OF **STRAPP** ESCAPING STUPID



C-MZ
KBSR

THE WASHINGTON STREET BOYS

FRANKIE: Quiet... but dangerous. No one knew what was simmering underneath. You didn't mess with him.



RALPH: Carefree and fun-loving. Always up for a good time. Proud that he was older than the rest of us and the only one with a car. If you wanted to ride, you paid. Money went straight into the glove box.



KEITH: Feisty little guy. Always stirring up trouble. Loved getting guys going at each other.



JIMMY: Tall. Kind-hearted. Stayed out of trouble—for the most part.



KENNY: Thin. Quiet wise guy, cutting guys down under his breath. Lived to take shots at somebody, anybody.



MIKE: Big kid. Simple-minded. Gullible. Easy to lead... wherever the crowd was going.



RANDY: Tough guy. Liked breaking rules. Always ready to fight if pushed.



OTHER KEY PLAYERS

LIPENSKE: Came off like he thought he was better than the rest of us. Every time someone reached out, he fired back with a sharp comment—just enough to keep you at arm's length. He never showed up at the bowling alley, never really mixed in. Acted like the Washington Street boys were beneath him.



ALUMINUM SCREEN DOOR: Not a person—but it played a role. Hit it hard, and it doesn't just slam... it crashes!!!



THE REAL ADVENTURES OF

STRAPP

ESCAPING STUPID

A True Story recounted by John Strappazon



THE SIMPLE BELIEVE ANYTHING,
BUT THE PRUDENT GIVE
THOUGHT TO THEIR STEPS.
—PROVERBS 14:15 (NIV)

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HI, I'M STRAPP. RIGHT NOW I'M SITTING IN THE BACK OF A POLICE CAR PANICKING.



HOW WILL MY PARENTS REACT WHEN THEY FIND OUT WHAT I'VE DONE?!!!

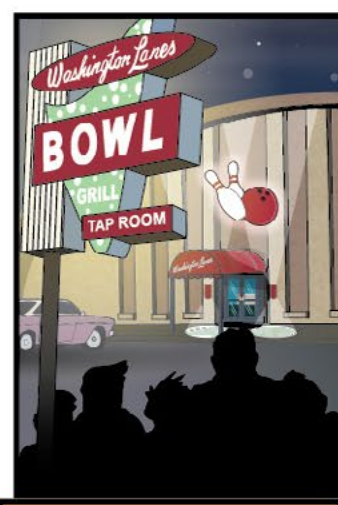
LET ME TELL YOU THE REAL STORY OF HOW I ENDED UP HERE.

A FEW HOURS EARLIER...

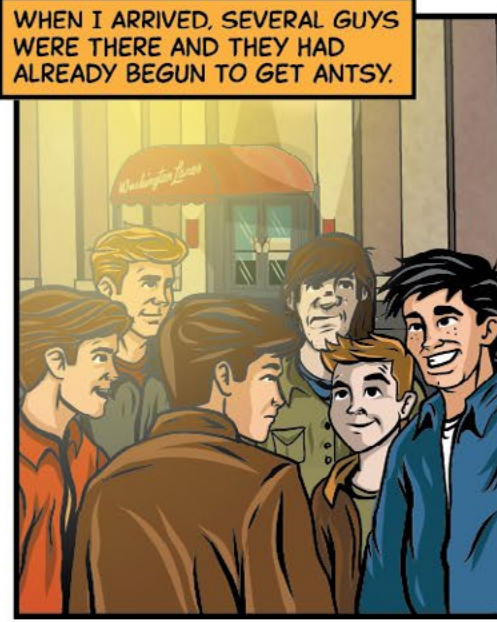


SOMETIMES WHAT FEELS RIGHT CAN LEAD US STRAIGHT INTO TROUBLE. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME. - STRAPP

WHEN I ARRIVED, SEVERAL GUYS WERE THERE AND THEY HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO GET ANTSY.



TEENAGE GUYS COUPLED WITH NOTHING TO DO CAN BE A VERY DANGEROUS COMBINATION...



I WAS FIFTEEN AND BORED. IT WAS EARLY IN THE EVENING AND I HAD NOTHING TO DO.



SO, I DECIDED TO HEAD TO WASHINGTON LANES.



I'M GOING TO THE BOWLIN' ALLEY.

KEITH PIPED UP...



I'VE GOT A REAL GOOD IDEA...



LET'S FINISH THIS INSIDE. IT'S FREEZING!



LIKE MOST EVENINGS AT THE LANES, WE RARELY BOWLED, BUT INSTEAD JUST HUNG OUT. ONCE INSIDE WE BEGAN TO PLAN THE NIGHT'S EVENTS...

MY FATHER, NIRO, WASN'T TOO THRILLED WITH MY CONSTANT GOING OUT ALL THE TIME.



WHY DON'T YOU EVER STAY HOME?!

I FIGURED THERE WOULD BE SOME OF MY FRIENDS THERE AND WE'D FIND SOMETHING TO DO.



THERE IS A WAY THAT APPEARS TO BE RIGHT, BUT IN THE END IT LEADS TO DEATH. - PROVERBS 14:12 (NIV)



I'VE GOT SOME EGGS STASHED DOWN IN GHOST TOWN!

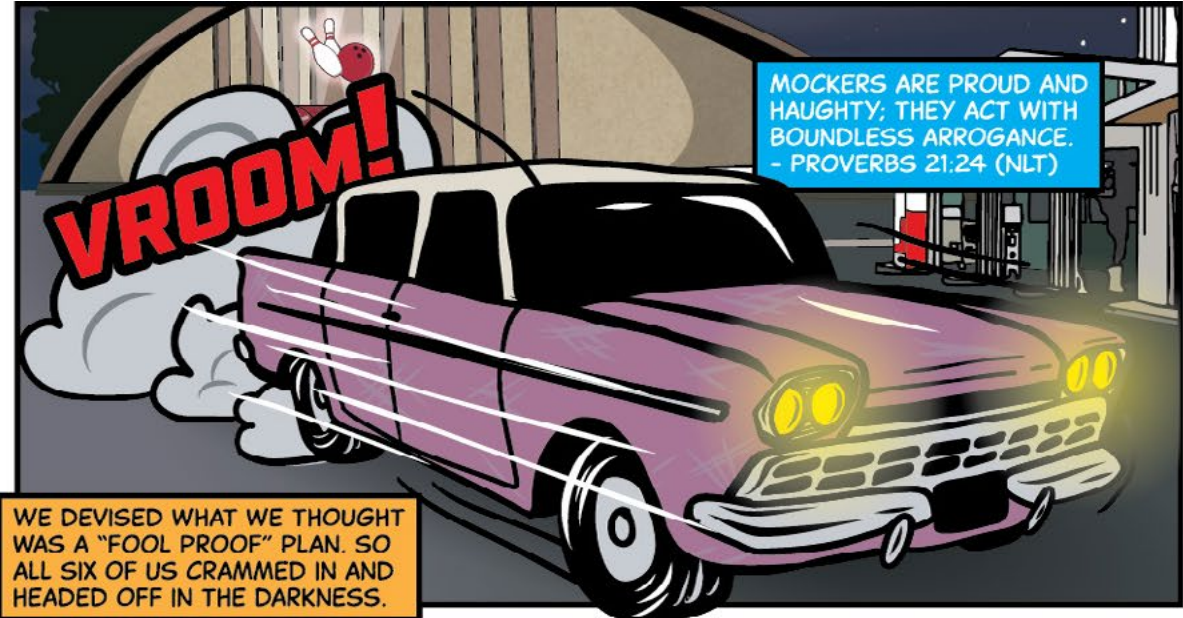
YOU GUYS THINKIN' WHAT I AM?

GHOST TOWN WAS A FEW OLD BUILDINGS BEHIND SOME HOUSES OFF AN ABANDONED AND OVERGROWN ALLEY. THE PERFECT HIDING SPOT!

AFTER VERY LITTLE THOUGHT WE PICKED A KID'S HOUSE WE ALL DISLIKED.



RALPH, THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS OLD ENOUGH TO DRIVE, HAD A 1957 PINK FOUR DOOR RAMBLER. A VERY UNCOOL CAR, BUT IT WOULD WORK.



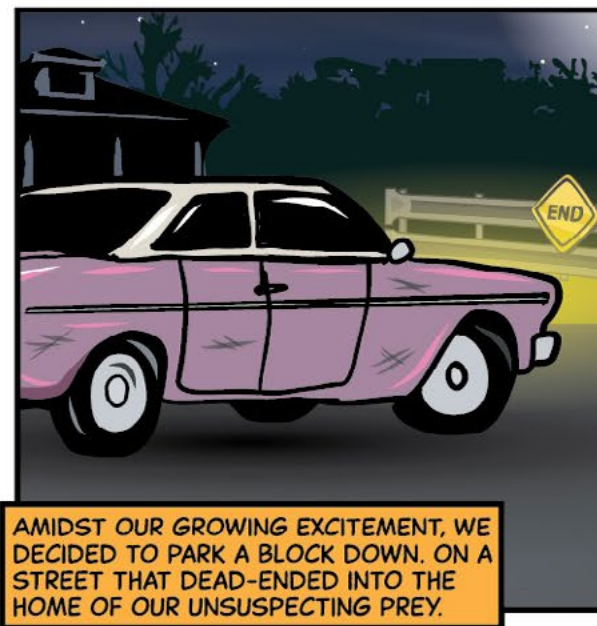
WE DEvised WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS A "FOOL PROOF" PLAN. SO ALL SIX OF US CRAMMED IN AND HEADED OFF IN THE DARKNESS.

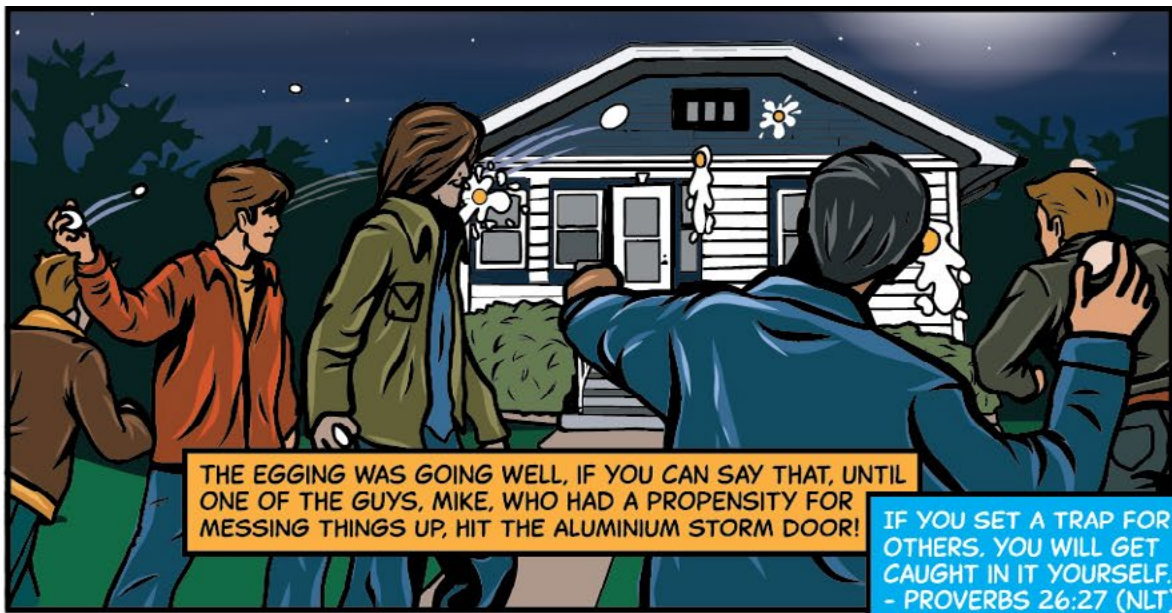


LIPENSKE HAD BEEN A REAL PAIN TO ME, ALWAYS ACTING LIKE HE WAS BETTER THAN THE REST OF US. BUT I DIDN'T DISLIKE HIM AS MUCH AS THEY DID. SO, I DECIDED NOT TO THROW ANY EGGS.



BUT WITH NOTHING ELSE TO DO I DECIDED TO GO ANYWAY. GET A FEW LAUGHS, A LITTLE DANGER, AND OF COURSE I COULDN'T RISK APPEARING "UNCOOL".





THE EGGING WAS GOING WELL, IF YOU CAN SAY THAT, UNTIL ONE OF THE GUYS, MIKE, WHO HAD A PROPENSITY FOR MESSING THINGS UP, HIT THE ALUMINIUM STORM DOOR!

IF YOU SET A TRAP FOR OTHERS, YOU WILL GET CAUGHT IN IT YOURSELF. - PROVERBS 26:27 (NLT)



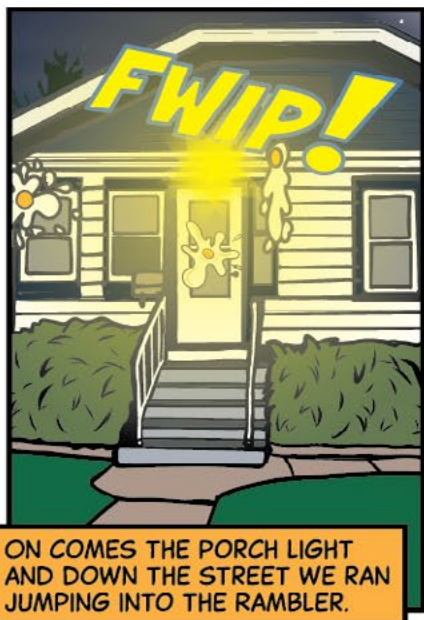
OUR FOOL PROOF PLAN DIDN'T GO AS PLANNED.

YOU IDIOT! YOU HIT THE ALUMINIUM DOOR!

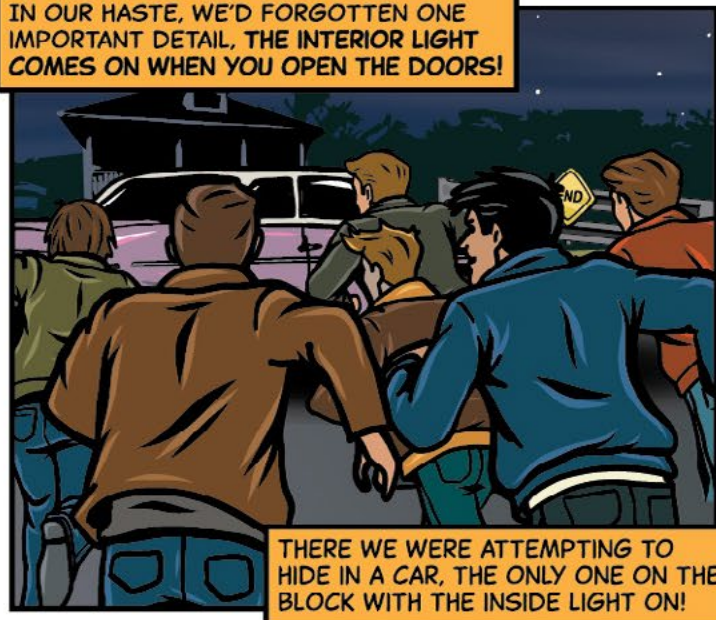


IT DID HOWEVER PROVE THAT WE WERE FOOLS.

UH, OH! RUN!



ON COMES THE PORCH LIGHT AND DOWN THE STREET WE RAN JUMPING INTO THE RAMBLER.



IN OUR HASTE, WE'D FORGOTTEN ONE IMPORTANT DETAIL, THE INTERIOR LIGHT COMES ON WHEN YOU OPEN THE DOORS!

THERE WE WERE ATTEMPTING TO HIDE IN A CAR, THE ONLY ONE ON THE BLOCK WITH THE INSIDE LIGHT ON!

TO OUR HORROR, DOWN THE STREET FLIES A CAR WITH NO LIGHTS ON. OH, NO! IT WAS LIPENSKÉ'S DAD'S CAR!



THE CAR SLAMS TO A HALT RAZOR CLOSE TO THE DRIVER'S SIDE OF OUR RAMBLER, TRAPPING RALPH, THE DRIVER, AND I IN THE BACK SEAT RIGHT BEHIND HIM.



OUT JUMPS AN OLDER MAN SCREAMING AT US, PULLING OPEN OUR PASSENGER FRONT DOOR.

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU KIDS DOING?!

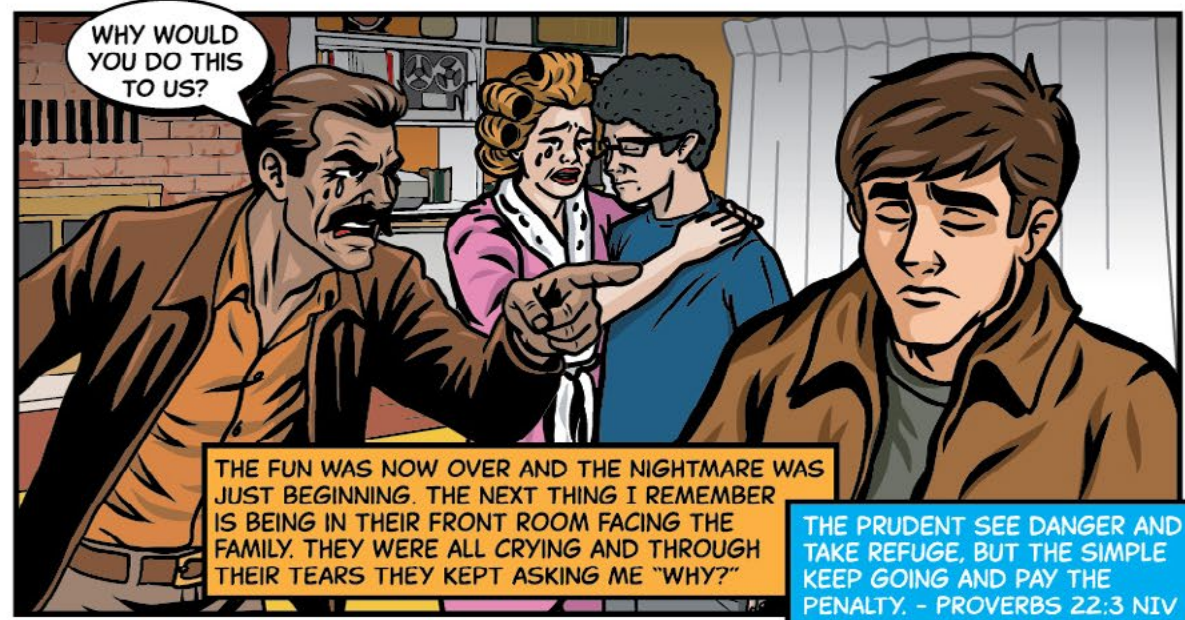


AS THINGS BEGIN TO SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL, OUT OF NOWHERE, FRANKIE SLUGS HIM AND KNOCKS HIM FLAT!!!



THE REST OF THE GUYS JUMP OVER HIM AND RUN OFF, AS I'M ABOUT TO MAKE MY BREAK, THE DAD JUMPS UP AND GRABS ME.

COME HERE, YOU!



WHY WOULD YOU DO THIS TO US?

THE FUN WAS NOW OVER AND THE NIGHTMARE WAS JUST BEGINNING. THE NEXT THING I REMEMBER IS BEING IN THEIR FRONT ROOM FACING THE FAMILY. THEY WERE ALL CRYING AND THROUGH THEIR TEARS THEY KEPT ASKING ME "WHY?"

THE PRUDENT SEE DANGER AND TAKE REFUGE, BUT THE SIMPLE KEEP GOING AND PAY THE PENALTY. - PROVERBS 22:3 NIV

IT WAS GUT WRENCHING. I COULDN'T ANSWER THEM. WHAT WAS I TO SAY, "IT'S BECAUSE YOUR KIDS A JERK?" SO I KEEP SILENT AND CRIED TOO.



WALK WITH THE WISE AND BECOME WISE; ASSOCIATE WITH FOOLS AND GET IN TROUBLE. - PROVERBS 13:20 NLT

THE POLICE ARRIVED AFTER WHAT FELT LIKE AN ETERNITY.



THEY PUT ME IN THE BACK SEAT OF A COP CAR AND TOOK ME STRAIGHT TO THE BOWLING ALLEY.



DO YOU WANT TO PRESS CHARGES?

WE'LL TAKE THEM DOWNTOWN RIGHT NOW AND BOOK THEM IF YOU DO.



NO. I THINK THIS IS ENOUGH.



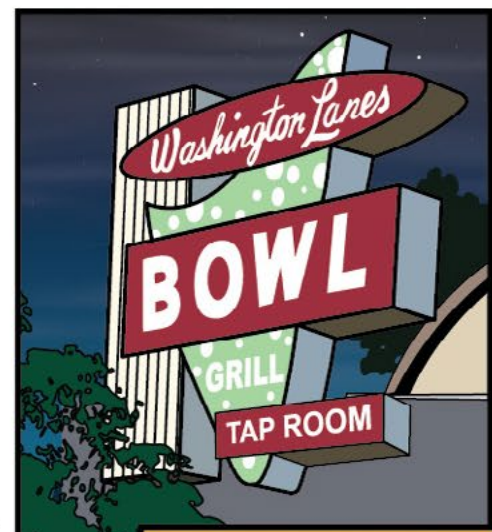
I'M WRITING YOUR NAMES AND ADDRESSES IN MY BOOK.

IF THERE ARE ANY MORE REPORTS OF EGGING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, WE'RE COMING FOR YOU BOYS, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

I DON'T REMEMBER TELLING THEM TO GO THERE, I WASN'T A SNITCH;



I GUESS THEY JUST KNEW WHERE TO FIND THE HOODLUMS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD, THE WASHINGTON STREET BOYS.



ALL THE GUYS HAD RUN BACK THERE, ANOTHER PART OF OUR FOOL PROOF PLAN.

WHEN I WAS FACED WITH WHAT I HAD DONE, THE HURT I HAD CAUSED, IT HIT ME IN MY HEART. ALL OF A SUDDEN IT WASN'T COOL OR FUN TO EGG SOMEONE'S HOME.



AND IF THAT WASN'T BAD ENOUGH, I WAS EMBARRASSED AND HUMILIATED BY WHAT I'D DONE. ON TOP OF THAT, I NEEDED TO MAKE SURE MY PARENTS DIDN'T FIND OUT.

IF YOU SET A TRAP FOR OTHERS, YOU WILL GET CAUGHT IN IT YOURSELF. IF YOU ROLL A BOULDER DOWN ON OTHERS, IT WILL CRUSH YOU INSTEAD. - PROVERBS 26:27 NLT

THE POLICE DROVE US BACK TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME AND LINED US UP IN FRONT OF THE EGGED HOUSE ON THE SIDEWALK WHICH WAS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER FROM MY HOUSE!



THE OFFICERS MADE IT AS INTIMIDATING AS THEY COULD BY TURNING ON AND OFF A FLASHLIGHT SAYING, "IS THIS ONE OF THEM?"...

ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T KNOW JESUS YET, I KNEW THAT WHAT I WAS A PART OF AND WHO I WAS BECOMING WASN'T ONLY WRONG, IT WAS STUPID. I KNEW THAT WHERE I WAS HEADED WAS NOT WHERE I WANTED TO GO.



AFTER THAT INCIDENT I MADE WHAT I THOUGHT WAS A DECISION TO CHANGE THE GROUP I HUNG OUT WITH. BUT I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

HOWEVER, HAVING DONE NOTHING TO CHANGE MY WAYS AND WHO I HUNG AROUND WITH A FEW WEEKS LATER I FOUND MYSELF AGAIN AT THE BOWLING ALLEY, BORED AND WITH SOME OF THE WASHINGTON STREET BOYS.



AS A DOG RETURNS TO ITS VOMIT, SO FOOLS REPEAT THEIR FOLLY. — PROVERBS 26:11 NIV

SO, ANYONE WANT TO GO EGGING?!

WHEN THE IDEA OF THROWING EGGS AT CARS CAME UP, I OPTED OUT. HOWEVER, MY FOMO GOT ME.

I TOOK OFF TOWARD MY HOUSE, TRYING TO WALK LIKE NOTHING WAS WRONG WHILE MY HEART WAS POUNDING OUT OF MY CHEST. AS I MADE MY WAY UP THE STREET, RANDY (ONE OF THE WASHINGTON STREET CREW) HOLLERED AT ME FROM ACROSS THE ROAD.



YOU'D BETTER GET HOME, STRAPP! WE HIT AN OFF-DUTY COP AND HE'S AFTER US!

THAT WAS IT. I CUT RIGHT BEHIND A ROW OF HOUSES AND RAN LIKE MY LIFE DEPENDED ON IT—DOWN AN ALLEY.



MAKING SURE THE COAST WAS CLEAR, I DARTED ACROSS WASHINGTON STREET, AND SLIPPED INTO MY HOUSE UNSEEN.



UH, I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU AFTERWARDS.

I TOLD A COUPLE OF THEM, KEN AND JIMMY, I'D CATCH UP WITH THEM AT GALLIE'S, A LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD BAR, ON A SIDE STREET JUST OFF WASHINGTON STREET.

AFTER POLISHING OFF A COKE AND A BAG OF CHIPS ON THE BACK STEPS AT GALLIE'S, SOMETHING DIDN'T SIT RIGHT.



IT HAD BEEN TOO QUIET... TOO LONG. SO I HEADED BACK TOWARD WASHINGTON STREET.

I'D BARELY GOTTEN MY COAT OFF WHEN THE DOORBELL RANG. IT WAS THE COPS. AND THEY WERE ASKING FOR ME.



DING DONG!

AS THE DOOR OPENED MY HEART SANK. THE BOOK. MY NAME WAS STILL IN IT FROM THE FIRST EGGING. I WAS COOKED.



GOOD EVENING MA'AM...

I FOUND KENNY AND JIMMY LEANING AGAINST THE COKE MACHINE IN FRONT OF THE SHELL STATION, JUST A BLOCK FROM GALLIE'S.



THE MOMENT I SAW THEM, I KNEW SOMETHING WAS OFF. THEY WERE TRYING WAY TOO HARD TO LOOK COOL — HANDS IN POCKETS, STARING OFF LIKE NOTHING IN THE WORLD WAS HAPPENING.



WHEN THEY SPOTTED ME, THEY LEANED IN AND WHISPERED, "THE COPS ARE LOOKING FOR US." THAT WAS ALL I NEEDED TO HEAR.

MOM ANSWERED THE DOOR; CALM AS COULD BE. WHEN THE OFFICER ASKED WHERE I'D BEEN THIS EVENING SHE SAID...



OH, YES OFFICER. HE'S BEEN HOME ALL EVENING.



I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. SHE COVERED FOR ME. SHE LIED FOR ME. (MOM MEANT WELL, BUT LYING IS ALWAYS A BAD IDEA.)



THE WHOLE CREW HAD BEEN CAUGHT—ARRESTED, HAULED DOWNTOWN, AND BOOKED. THEIR PARENTS HAD TO COME IN AND GET THEM.

AND EVERY ONE OF THEM WAS LOOKING AT A COURT DATE.



GUILTY!

I GOT AWAY THIS TIME, BARELY. WHAT ABOUT NEXT TIME? I HAD TO CHANGE.

I MADE THREE INTENTIONAL CHANGES:



1. **CHANGED MY FRIENDS** - I FOUND PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH GOALS AND GOOD DIRECTION. IT WASN'T EASY, BUT I HAD TO MOVE ON FROM OLD HABITS AND OLD COMPANY.

WALK WITH THE WISE AND BECOME WISE, FOR A COMPANION OF FOOLS SUFFERS HARM. — PROVERBS 13:20 (NIV)

2. **CHANGED MY HABITS** - NOTHING GOOD EVER HAPPENED FOR ME AT THAT BOWLING ALLEY SO I STOPPED GOING. I FOUND BETTER PLACES TO SPEND MY TIME.

THE HIGHWAY OF THE UPRIGHT AVOIDS EVIL; THOSE WHO GUARD THEIR WAYS PRESERVE THEIR LIVES. — PROVERBS 16:17 (NIV)

3. **CHANGED MY MINDSET** - I STARTED TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF MY FUTURE. I DECIDED NOT TO LIVE PASSIVELY, PUSHED AROUND BY PEER PRESSURE.

FEAR OF MAN WILL PROVE TO BE A SNARE, BUT WHOEVER TRUSTS IN THE LORD IS KEPT SAFE. — PROVERBS 29:25 (NIV)



DO NOT BE MISLED: "BAD COMPANY CORRUPTS GOOD CHARACTER." - 1 CORINTHIANS 15:33 (NIV)

ESCAPING STUPID WASN'T EASY. IT WAS ACTUALLY HARDER THAN I'D FIRST THOUGHT. AFTER ALL, I'D GROWN UP WITH THESE GUYS, THEY WERE THE ONLY REAL FRIENDS I'D EVER KNOWN. I HAD TO COME UP WITH A PLAN, ONE I'D STICK TO.

HERE'S A WARNING AND A WAY OUT:



YOU NEVER COMPLETELY ESCAPE STUPID ONCE AND FOR ALL. IT WILL ALWAYS TRY TO PULL YOU BACK. BUT GOD OFFERS A BETTER PATH.

TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART; DO NOT DEPEND ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING. SEEK HIS WILL IN ALL YOU DO, AND HE WILL SHOW YOU WHICH PATH TO TAKE. — PROVERBS 3:5-6 (NLT)

Want to start a life of escaping stupid?

HIT THE QR CODE.



THE REAL ADVENTURES OF **STRAPP** A STORY THAT STILL SPEAKS

This is a true story from my life. As you read, I'll reflect on the events and share what I learned—because God's Word can give insight even in our dumbest moments.

*There is a way that appears to be right,
but in the end it leads to death.*

—Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)

Sometimes what feels right can lead us straight into trouble. That's what happened to me.

PRESENTED BY

STRAPP
ministries