



Perspective

By Jamie Buckingham

When Tommy was six years old his father was caught speeding. He told the officer he was hurrying home because his wife had called and the baby was having convulsions. The officer waved them on.

Tommy said, "But, Daddy, we don't have a baby."

The father grinned, "It's okay, Tommy, as long as you can get away with it."

When Tommy was nine his mother locked her keys in the car while shopping. A friend broke the window to get them out. He told her to be sure and tell the insurance man that some kid had done it so she could collect her insurance. He winked at Tommy, "It's okay as long as you can get away with it."

When he was 11, a bill collector came to the door. His mother told him to tell the man she was not at home. "It's okay, Tommy," she whispered, "as long as you can get away with it."

When Tommy was 12, his Uncle Harry, who was a big building contractor, liquidated all his assets and went into bankruptcy to escape his creditors. Uncle Harry left for a vacation in Europe telling Tommy, "It's okay as long as you can get away with it."

When he was 13 his mother took him to Dallas on an airliner. She told the ticket agent that he was only 12 so she could get half fare. "It's okay, son," she said, "as long as you can get away with it."

When he was 16 he made right tackle on the football team. His coach showed him how to block and at the same time grab the opposing end by the jersey so the official couldn't see it. "It's okay, kid," the coach said, "as long as you can get away with it."

When he was 17 he took a summer job at the supermarket. The manager showed him how to put the overripe strawberries in the bottom of the baskets and the good ones on top. "It's okay, kid" the manager said, "as long as you can get away with it."

When he was 18 he had offers from 16 universities which wanted him to play football. He selected the one who had an alumnus who would give him a new car. "It's okay, kid," the recruiter said, "as long as you can get away with it."

When Tommy was 19 he was caught by the campus police stealing test answers from the dean's office. He was expelled from school.

"How could you shame us this way?" his parents screamed.

"Today's young people are degenerate," the psychiatrist said. "They have a warped code of ethics."

"It's shameful the way these kids carry on these days," said the educator.

"Tch, tch," said the moralist.

"If there's one thing we adults can't stand—it's a kid who steals and cheats."