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Writer/s: [Andrew Frost](#)

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The cops arrived just in time to see a group of kids pushing a candy bar vending machine out of Erina Fair Shopping Village into the car park. The search lights on top of the patrol car caught the kids as they got the machine over a speed hump, the machine then toppling over—glass smashing, candy bars spilling out—the kids seeing the police—startled faces in hoodies, white like a camera flash—then running and laughing as they disappeared into the bushes near Toys R Us. The two cops didn't even bother chasing them. They picked up the Snickers and the Mars Bars and the Aeroes, tossed the lot into the back of the cop car, and called it in. It was a minor thing, a low key Friday night really. No need to waste all that energy trying to catch a bunch of energetic 13-year-olds they'd just probably catch later.

The cops could be kind, in a cop sort of way. One kid was picked up late on Saturday night, pissed on UDL Scotch and Coke, after throwing garbage bins and a shopping trolley into the water next to Iguana Joe's. He'd been with some other guys, mostly about 15 to 18, and they'd run off, but this one was so hammered the cops took a hold of his elbows and gently guided him into the back of the paddy wagon. They could have booked him, given him a criminal record, but it was a hassle, a bunch of fucking paper work, and the Desk Sergeant recognised the kid, that skinny ginger-haired boy named Brett from a pretty good family. His dad was a plumber or something. So Brett ended up in the cells until 9.00 a.m. the next morning. Two constables took him to a bus stop near Kincumber and left him there with enough money to get home. It seemed like a pretty good deal to the cops but Brett thought they were cunts. They hadn't given him enough money for a hair of the dog. Typical fucking cops.

Judy was that woman who used to hang around the playground next to Fisherman's Wharf, drinking, smoking, shelling prawns, while keeping an eye on Kyle and Farnsie. Alan moved into her place last year and it was looking good. He'd split with his wife and with a man around the place the two kids started behaving a lot better. Judy was happy with the whole situation. Six months—good times. Then Alan lost his job at Peats Ridge and his ex started demanding the support payments. Lots of pressure. Alan drifted back to the bad old ways Judy remembered from when they were kids themselves. But things have changed, so Alan used the last of the severance to score ice. Alan was up for days at a time, wanking hour after hour after hour. Judy was pretty broadminded but had rules—no wanking in front of the kids, especially not in front of Farnsie. Then last week Judy was washing Farnsie's hair in the bathroom and Alan walked in, cock out. Judy just lost it. Ran into the kitchen, ran back,

screamed at Alan, and sunk the serrated blade of the bread knife into his shoulder as he tried to jump out the window. Alan was naked, a massive bloody erection, screaming as he crawled up the street. The neighbours must have called triple 0 as soon as the commotion started. The cops arrived in record time. Judy was charged with 'temp-murder'. The kids ended up in care, Alan moved back in with his ex.

Most of the time it's just the kids, totally among the young. Bryan was arrested for killing this other kid. The details are confusing but basically Bryan is a bit touched and this other boy, Dean, also 15, was taunting him. They were in a park. Bryan picked up a rock and literally smashed this other kid's brains out, then went home for a tuna sandwich. When the police arrived Bryan was eating the tuna sandwich while watching the Shopping Channel with his mother. They took him in and he confessed to everything because he just didn't like it when other kids called him a spaz and that made him mad. He was sorry. The judge decided Bryan had been provoked and since he was retarded, had no other record of violence or criminal activity, he gave Bryan a suspended sentence, restricting him to his home when he wasn't at school.

The story would have ended there except six months later Bryan's mother applied to the court for permission to take Bryan to Disneyland. He'd always wanted to go there and it was why he always wore the same Three Little Pigs tee-shirt. A story about the application was in the local paper. Dean's older brother Gary, drinking at the Empire Bay Tavern, said to friends that if the court gave Bryan's mum permission to take him to Disneyland he wouldn't make it to the fucking train station let alone the Magic Kingdom.

It makes you wonder what the court official might have been thinking on the day she wrote the letter to Bryan's mother that said, yes, she could take her kid to Disneyland. Probably nothing. That's not their job. Anyway, Bryan's mum told her sister over the fence and the news got around. Bryan had gone to the shop and didn't come home for hours and so his mum called the police. His body was found the next day in a storm water drain near the RSL at Ourimbah, his head staved in by what the coroner later decided must have been a pipe. There was also evidence of torture—cigarette burns on his genitals and defensive wounds to his hands. Gary had a rock solid alibi when the police got around to interviewing him. He'd been teaching Tae Kwon Do at the youth centre. Ask anyone who'd been there, he said.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Andrew Frost.