

Eddie, The Junior Year

Jimmy O'Brien's Folly

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Jimmy O'Brien is not very competent on the track. In fact, Jimmy O'Brien is not competent at much of anything. O'Brien, who snuck back onto the track team after being cut, and caused a collision on the track, has a score to settle with Braden. O'Brien still thinks that Braden collided with him intentionally. So does O'Brien's father, Mr. O'Brien, the communist social studies teacher. O'Brien, upset that he has been cut from the team, has vowed to get back at those whom he believes are responsible for him not making the team. Waiting for an opportune time, O'Brien thinks he has found exactly the opening he was waiting for.

Wanting to find something to do to occupy his time, O'Brien has joined the photography club. While the track team is out on the track running drills after school, O'Brien is sitting in a classroom learning the difference between aperture priority and shutter priority. Unfortunately, learning the difference between the two exposure modes won't matter much to O'Brien. Whereas everyone else in the club has a 35-millimeter single lens reflex camera, O'Brien has a cheap point and shoot camera. O'Brien's point and shoot pocket camera has no ability to do anything but point and shoot. When it comes to taking photographs, O'Brien is pretty much stuck to settling for what you see might be what you get.

Planning to give the students some experience in shooting action shots, Miss Dey, the photography club advisor and photography class instructor, takes the club

out to the schoolyard where the baseball team and track team are practicing. Neither Mr. Ryan, the baseball coach, nor Mr. Frazier, the track coach, care that the photography club often comes out to photograph the action. Knowing that they are being photographed makes the athletes perform better. And, there is always the chance that one of the photographs could make its way into the yearbook or school newspaper.

Over in the field area, Kathy is practicing her discus throw, which is where the photography club congregates. Miss Dey explains to her students, “if you take notice, the girl is moving very fast when she releases the discus. A blurred photograph where you cannot see the athlete’s facial expression is of absolutely no value. To get an awesome shot, you must stop the action. To stop the action, you must use a fast shutter speed. If your camera has a shutter priority mode, you can use that. Otherwise, you must set your camera in manual mode, and choose a shutter speed appropriate to stop the action. Please feel free to experiment with various shutter speeds to discover which speed is optimal for the scene. It is far better to experiment now versus during an actual competition.”

Miss Dey asks Mr. Zunde, “we would like to get a few photographs of the girl throwing the discus. Where would be a good place to stand to get the shots?” Mr. Zunde replies, “that highly depends who is throwing the discus. Kathy, the girl you are talking about, has great accuracy in her throws. The students can stand off to the side, anywhere outside of the red zone. You can be sure Kathy won’t hit anyone with the discus.” If Jimmy O’Brien were throwing the discus, nowhere would be considered safe.

Knowing she is now the center of attention, Kathy gets onto the discus pad, ready to make another throw. Eight photographers have their cameras focused on Kathy as she goes into the spin. Miss Dey, herself, has her camera focused on Kathy, ready to catch the action. Kathy goes into the spin and, when she is about to release the discus, the sound of multiple shutter releases are heard. The discus soars through the air, landing far out into the red zone. Where the discus lands, however, is of no interest to

the photographers. Their only interest lies between one second before and one second after the discus is released.

Miss Dey calls her group aside, telling them, "I hope you got some pretty good shots. Now, we're going to break into groups, and get a few more photographs of the action. Please be reminded to not interfere with the athletes while they are on the track or throwing their items. If there is any question of where to stand so that you are out of the way, please ask one of the coaches or the student assistants." After all, Miss Dey and the photography club would like to be invited back to photograph the athletes. Getting in the athlete's way does not pave the path to being invited back.

On the track, the athletes are running the relay drill. The only part of a relay race that is of interest to a photographer is the start, the finish, and the baton handoff. One group of photographers head over to the transition zone, hoping to get a few good shots of the handoff. Waiting in line, Eddie mentions to Mark, "look at who's here with the photography club." Mark looks a little beyond the transition zone, and replies, "if it isn't Jimmy O'Brien. I wonder what he's doing here." Eddie suggests, "he's probably chasing after one of the girls." Mark replies, "well, we know it ain't Lynn or Penny. They don't exactly like O'Brien." As Hoffer approaches the transition zone, Mark steps onto the track, hoping to give the photographers a good show. Hoffer hands off to Mark, accompanied by the sound of several shutter releases.

Eddie walks over, and asks Lynn, "did you get any good shots?" Lynn replies, "I think I got a really good shot of your girlfriend throwing the discus." Eddie tells Lynn, "you'll have to show it to me sometime." Eddie then curiously asks Lynn, "what's O'Brien doing here?" Lynn replies, "he joined the photography club a month ago. All he does is annoy the rest of us." Eddie laughs, and tells Lynn, "the photography club ought to have tryouts, like we do in track. Then, he can be cut from the club." Lynn laughs, and whispers to Eddie, "we all wish he would just leave. And, with his piece of shit camera, it's not like he's ever going to get any good photographs anyway." Eddie

tells Lynn, "it's my turn," and gets on the track. Lynn replies, "I'll get a good shot of you!"

Track practice comes to a close, and the athletes and photographers head inside. On the way in, Miss Dey tells her group, "tomorrow, we will be developing your film and making prints. We'll see how well everyone did out here today. And, next week, before we get to work, we'll be discussing how to choose the right speed film and aperture settings for getting the desired depth of field when taking action shots."

The photography club meets on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Tuesday, they learn a few things in the classroom, then take photographs. On Wednesday, they develop their film, and see how well their photographs turned out. Truth is, the photography club can't wait to see the results of their work today.

In the locker room, having a hard workout, the track team hits the showers. Braden asks anyone who may know, "what was O'Brien's ass doing out there today?" Eddie replies, "Lynn said he joined the photography club. I guess we'll be seeing a lot more of him at the meets." Braden exclaims, "just as long as he keeps his scrawny ass off the track, everything will be just fine." Braden remembers clearly when O'Brien inappropriately stepped onto the track during tryouts, and caused a serious collision.

Sneaking into the locker room, O'Brien takes a careful look around. Hearing the conversation between Braden and a few others in the showers, O'Brien stealthily approaches, staying close to the wall. Cautiously placing his camera just past the wall, O'Brien snaps a quick photo of the guys in the shower. Braden, nor anyone else in the shower, is aware of O'Brien's nasty deed. Mark, however, catches O'Brien in the act, and swiftly confiscates O'Brien's camera.

Holding O'Brien's camera way over his head, Mark exclaims, "what was that all about?" O'Brien screams, "give me my camera!" Mark replies, "no. That ain't happening,

junior." O'Brien jumps, trying to repossess his camera, but has no such luck. Mark is far taller than O'Brien. Mark shoves O'Brien aside, walks back to his locker, and locks O'Brien's camera safely away.

Eddie comes out of the shower, asking Mark, "what's going on?" Mark replies, "O'Brien, here, snapped a picture of you guys in the shower." Suddenly very angry, Eddie stares at O'Brien, firmly telling him, "give me your camera, junior!" Mark informs Eddie, "don't worry. It's in my locker." Eddie asks Mark, "can I have it?" Mark replies, "sure." O'Brien, however, exclaims, "I want my camera back! You better give it to me!" Mark tells O'Brien, "that ain't happening, junior!" Mark opens his locker, and hands O'Brien's camera to Eddie. O'Brien insists, "you'd better give me my camera!" Mark forcefully shoves O'Brien aside, who trips over his own uncoordinated feet and lands on the floor. Instead of confronting his adversaries, O'Brien heads straight to Mr. Crum's office to report that Mark and Eddie stole his camera.

Eddie tells Mark, "I'm going to get Lynn to develop the film tonight. If there's a picture of me in the shower, I'm kicking his scrawny ass." Mark replies, "good. I saw him take the picture. Now, I'm wondering what else he's got in that camera." Eddie tells Mark, "call me later, and I'll let you know." Mark replies, "you got it, bro." Eddie gets dressed, and heads out. Mark heads to the shower, hoping to get out of school before Mr. Crum arrives.

Later that evening, Eddie rides his bicycle over to Mark's house. Eddie shows Mark the negatives and contact prints that Lynn made of O'Brien's film. Eddie points to the contact prints, and explains, "he got a few shots of us out on the track and a dozen pictures of Lynn. And, there it is. A picture of me and a few other guys in the shower." Mark exclaims, "what a piece of shit!" Eddie points out, "he really got a good shot of Braden." Looking at the photograph, Mark replies, "Braden is going to be ticked off." Eddie mentions, "Lynn was really ticked off that O'Brien has been taking pictures of her." Mark replies, "I can see that. She doesn't like him at all."

Mark asks, "what are we going to do with O'Brien's camera?" Eddie replies, "destroy it." Mark smiles, and replies, "how are you going to do that?" Eddie replies, "I'm not sure yet. But, I'm going to do it right in front of him." Mark suggests, "we need to destroy the negatives." Eddie replies, "I'm going to do that too, but not yet. It's the only evidence I have. And, if that Mr. Crum tries to take the negatives from me, I'll just kick his ass too." Mark comments, "I definitely want to be there for that." Eddie points out to Mark, "for sure, Mr. Crum will call us into his office tomorrow morning." Mark and Eddie talk for a while longer, but it's getting late. Eddie heads home, wondering what tomorrow will bring.

As expected, the next morning during second period, the announcement is made over the loudspeaker, "will James O'Brien, Edward Bogenskaya, Mark Svoboda, and Mr. Frazier please report to the administrative offices immediately." In the gym, Mr. Zunde jokingly asks Mr. Frazier, "what have you done this time?" Mr. Frazier replies, "I don't know. Perhaps one of the guys kicked the shit out of O'Brien after school yesterday." Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Frazier, "let's go and see what he's up to this time. We've got a big meet tomorrow. We can't afford anyone getting suspended." Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde head to the administrative offices, wondering what the problem is today.

Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde walk into the administrative area, where Mrs. Marlowe informs them, "they're already seated in Mr. Crum's office. You can go in." Mrs. Marlowe then whispers, "Mr. O'Brien is in there too, and he's pretty mad." Mr. Zunde smiles, and replies, "good. He's even more irrational when he's mad."

Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde walk into Mr. Crum's office, seeing Mr. O'Brien, Jimmy O'Brien, Eddie, and Mark. Mr. Zunde asks, "what seems to be the problem today? Did Eddie or Mark prevent Jimmy from returning one of his overdue library books?" Mr. Crum brashly replies, "no! It's much more serious than that." With a sarcastic comeback, Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "something more serious? I see. Eddie and Mark must have been talking about Jimmy in

class and hurt his feelings.” Mr. Crum fails to answer Mr. Zunde, clearly knowing that any response he offers will only dig him into a deeper hole. Eddie and Mark laugh, both knowing they are now off the hook.

Mr. Crum opens the meeting by stating, “yesterday, after track practice, Mark Svoboda is reported to have stolen a camera owned by Jimmy O’Brien. This is a very serious matter. It is my understanding that, after taking the camera from Jimmy, Mark handed the camera to Eddie. Theft of personal property is not permitted in school, and I don’t think that I have to remind anyone that theft is also against the law. I’ve already heard Jimmy’s side of the story. So, before I suspend anyone, I want to find out exactly what happened yesterday.” As Mr. Crum continues to babble, Mr. Zunde whispers to Mr. Frazier, “this is going to be good. If Mark took O’Brien’s camera, I’m guessing he had a really good reason to do so.”

Mr. Crum tells Mark, “tell me why you stole Jimmy’s camera yesterday.” Mark replies, “I didn’t steal it. I confiscated it.” Mr. Crum insists, “there’s no difference. Now, please answer my question.” Mark replies, “there is a difference. I didn’t steal junior’s camera. I confiscated it.” Mr. Crum sarcastically tells Mark, “okay, then. Please tell me why you confiscated Jimmy’s camera,” greatly emphasizing the word ‘confiscated’. Mark bluntly and succinctly replies, “because that asshole took a picture of the guys in the shower.” Silence comes over the room, broken by Jimmy O’Brien exclaiming, “I did not!” O’Brien is sincerely hoping that he can get his camera back before the film can be developed. O’Brien, however, has no idea that Lynn has a darkroom in her basement, and developed the film for Eddie last night.

Mr. Crum brilliantly announces, “someone here is lying.” Fueling the fire, Mr. Zunde sarcastically asks, “what gives you that impression?” Mark replies to Mr. Crum, “it’s O’Brien.” O’Brien insists, “it is not! I want my camera back!” Eddie replies, “you’ll get it back when you tell the truth, junior.” Mr. Crum admonishes Eddie, telling him, “I haven’t gotten to you yet!” Eddie sarcastically replies, “waiting.” Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier stand in front of Mr.

Crum's bookcase, wondering where this heated verbal ping pong match is going. Eddie, however, is only getting warmed up.

Mr. Crum tells Eddie, "since you want to talk, please explain to me what you did with Jimmy's camera after Mark gave it to you." Eddie replies, "I took the camera over to Lynn Berson's house. She developed the film. There were a few shots of us out on the track and a dozen pictures of Lynn. And, there was a picture of me, Braden, Johnson, Springer, and someone else in the shower. I can't make out who the fifth person was." Breaking out in a sweat, O'Brien exclaims, "my camera must have gone off by itself!" Mark exclaims, "that's a bunch of bullshit! I saw you aim it, and shoot." Mr. Crum exclaims, "that's enough! I'm asking the questions here!" Mark sarcastically tells Mr. Crum, "I didn't ask a question."

Ignoring Mark for the moment, Mr. Crum asks Eddie, "how do you know what was on the film?" Eddie replies, "I told you. Weren't you listening to me? Lynn developed the film and made contact prints. I have the prints and negatives in my notebook, right here." Mr. Crum brashly insists, "show them to me!" Eddie takes the contact print out of his notebook, and shows it to Mr. Crum. Mr. Crum tries to take the print out of Eddie's hand, but Eddie will not let him. Mr. Crum boldly tells Eddie, "let me see this." Eddie replies, "you are seeing it." Mr. Crum sarcastically tells Eddie, "let me hold it, then." Eddie replies, "no." Mr. Crum tells Eddie, "unless you let me see this, I have half a mind to suspend you." Eddie replies, "go ahead. I don't care. My father told me that, if anyone takes the picture or negative from me, that I am to kick their ass and kick the ass of anyone who tries to stop me. Your call." Mr. Zunde smiles, and will be in no rush to stop Eddie should Eddie decide to kick the shit out of Mr. Crum. Not quite believing Eddie, Mr. Crum asks, "your father told you that?" Eddie replies, "yeah. And, he said that he'll finish the job on them if I don't. Go ahead and call him. I'm sure he'd like to finish off your desk while he's at it."

As Eddie stands his ground arguing with Mr. Crum, Mr. Frazier whispers to Mr. Frazier, "it looks like the guys are

off the hook for this one.” Mr. Zunde replies, “of course they are. If there’s a picture of the guys naked in the shower on that roll of film, O’Brien can be brought up on pornography charges. He could land in jail.”

Stepping into the conversation, Mr. O’Brien insists, “I want Jimmy’s camera returned, and I want it returned right now.” Eddie replies, “he’s not getting it back anytime soon. And, I don’t have it. So, I can’t give it back to him.” In a quivering voice, Mr. O’Brien sternly tells Eddie, “you most certainly do have it!” Eddie replies, “well, since you know everything, go and find it yourself.”

Trying to regain control of his meeting, Mr. Crum asks Eddie, “where is the camera now?” Eddie replies, “I don’t know. I don’t have it.” Mr. Crum brashly tells Eddie, “that’s it! I’ve heard enough out of you! I’m going to suspend you.” Eddie replies, “go ahead. See if I care.”

Mr. Zunde interrupts the meeting, informing Mr. Crum, “Crum, you’re not suspending anyone, unless it’s Jimmy O’Brien. A student expects and has a right to a certain level of privacy in the locker room and in the shower. Photographing a student in the shower is a clear violation of that right. If there is, in fact, a naked picture of Eddie, Braden, Johnson, and Springer on that roll of film, the law would consider that pornography.” Mr. Zunde then asks Eddie, “may I see the photograph?” Eddie hands the contact sheet to Mr. Zunde, and points out the photo of the guys in the shower. Mr. Crum is even more angry that Eddie freely allowed Mr. Zunde to hold the contact sheet when Mr. Crum was denied that privilege.

After examining the evidence, Mr. Zunde informs those present, “from what I see here, criminal and civil charges can be brought against Jimmy O’Brien in a court of law.” Focusing his attention to Mr. Crum, Mr. Zunde tells him, “you were right, Mr. Crum. This is a very serious matter. Perhaps we should get the police involved.” Hearing that the police could potentially be involved, both Mr. Crum and Mr. O’Brien look very worried.

Realizing that his son, Jimmy, can potentially be in a lot of trouble, Mr. O'Brien tells Mr. Zunde, "all I want is for Jimmy's camera to be returned to him. That shouldn't be so difficult, now should it?" Mr. Zunde tells Mr. O'Brien, "that's not my problem. It's your problem. Why don't you ask Eddie for the camera?" Mr. O'Brien informs Mr. Zunde, "I did! He's not being very cooperative." Mr. Zunde again tells Mr. O'Brien, "that would be your problem, not mine."

Mr. O'Brien again boldly tells Eddie, "I want Jimmy's camera returned to him." Sounding a bit like Mr. Zunde, Eddie replies, "so what? That's your problem, not mine." Mr. O'Brien asks Eddie, "just how is that my problem?" Eddie finally explains, "I don't have O'Brien's camera. My father does. He told me that, if O'Brien wants his camera back, both you and that little squirt of a son of yours will have to see him to get it back. So, if you want the camera back, talk to my father. And, don't be too surprised if he kicks your ass."

Hearing Eddie's boldness in maintaining his ground, Mr. Crum announces, "that's enough! This meeting is getting nowhere. This is what I am going to do. I will have the secretary call Eddie's father, and see if we can get him to come down to the school and return the camera. Until then, I am not going to make a decision about any disciplinary action that I might take." Dismissing the students, Mr. Crum announces, "Eddie, Mark, and Jimmy, you can go back to class." Addressing the physical education instructors, Mr. Crum tells Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde, "you both are dismissed." Everyone walks out of Mr. Crum's office, except for Mr. O'Brien. It's anybody's guess what the principal and the social studies teacher plan to discuss.

Out in the school lobby, Mr. Zunde asks Eddie, "did your father really tell you to kick the ass of anyone who takes those photographs from you?" Eddie replies, "yeah. He said he'd clean up the mess I made afterwards." Mr. Zunde tells Eddie, "I shouldn't say this, but I would like to have seen that." Mr. Frazier mentions, "that's two of us." Mark adds, "make that three of us." Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier head back to the gym. Eddie and Mark head back

to class. Jimmy O'Brien, more embarrassed than ever, heads to the nurse's office with a vague complaint of not feeling well, hoping to get out of school for the rest of the day.

One week later, Mr. Bogenskaya drives up to the school, parking his work truck in the no parking zone that is reserved for busses at the school's entrance. Walking into the administrative area, Mr. Bogenskaya tells the secretary, Mrs. Marlowe, "get that Crum out here, please." Mrs. Marlowe phones Mr. Crum, telling him that someone is here to see him.

Mr. Crum walks out of his office and, recognizing Mr. Bogenskaya, asks, "how can I help you?" Mr. Bogenskaya firmly tells Mr. Crum, "get Jimmy O'Brien, Mr. O'Brien, and Eddie down here right now." Not wanting any more furniture destroyed, Mr. Crum obliges, and instructs Mrs. Marlowe, "please call them all to my office." Mrs. Marlowe announces over the public address system, "will Edward Bogenskaya, James O'Brien, and Mr. O'Brien please report to the administrative office."

Over in the gym, Mr. Zunde walks over to Mr. Frazier, and tells him, "I'll be right back. I can't even imagine what this is going to be about." Mr. Frazier replies, "I'm coming." Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde head to the administrative offices, preparing for the worst. Walking into the administrative area, Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier are instructed by Mrs. Marlowe to join the meeting in Mr. Crum's office. Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier stand silently with their arms crossed, which worries Mr. Crum. Eddie is the last to arrive, relieved to see his father sitting in Mr. Crum's office.

Mr. Crum opens the meeting, stating, "I see Mr. Bogenskaya is here to return Jimmy's camera." Mr. Bogenskaya interrupts Mr. Crum, telling him, "shut up. And, listen to me, you pencil pushing moron. Let's get something straight. If any more photographs are taken of my son without his clothes on, what happens to that person will be their problem. Am I understood?" No one says anything, prompting Mr. Crum to reply, "I think we can

all agree that an incident like that will not happen again.” Mr. Bogenskaya turns, looks at Jimmy O’Brien, and exclaims, “am I understood?” Trembling, O’Brien replies, “yes, sir.”

Mr. Bogenskaya places O’Brien’s camera on Mr. Crum’s desk, and announces, “here’s the camera.” The camera lies on the desk for fifteen seconds, accompanied by dead silence in the room. Mr. O’Brien reaches for the camera but, before he can obtain it, Mr. Bogenskaya’s fist comes crashing down on the camera, smashing it to pieces. Eddie, who already knew what was going to happen today, laughs hysterically. Mr. Zunde whispers to Mr. Frazier, “that was certainly worth the price of admission.”

Mr. Bogenskaya stands up, and tells Mr. O’Brien, “you should have bought your son a better camera. That one is built like a piece of shit.” Pointing to the camera that he just destroyed, Mr. Bogenskaya tells Jimmy O’Brien, “if you so much as point another camera at Eddie when he is naked, that’s what’s going to happen to you. And, don’t come crying to the head of the pussy factory, here, when it happens.” Mr. Bogenskaya then announces, “this meeting is over. Everyone, get back to work, or whatever you call it around here.”

Out in the school lobby, Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Bogenskaya, “it’s good to see you again.” Mr. Bogenskaya replies, “it’s good to see you and Mr. Frazier again. The track team is looking very strong this year. You both are to be commended.” Mr. Zunde explains, “we’ve hit a few bumps in the road, but we’re looking good going into the State meet. I suspect Eddie will walk away with a few gold medals.” Mr. Bogenskaya replies, “Eddie has been training hard. He’s really looking forward to the meet. I’ll be there watching with Nina.” Mr. Frazier comments, “we’ve been doing good at keeping Mr. Crum at bay. But, it seems that he’s on the warpath again.” Mr. Bogenskaya laughs, and replies, “I sincerely hope I helped you guys out today.” Mr. Frazier informs Mr. Bogenskaya, “you certainly did. Thank you.”

Eddie heads back to class. Mr. Bogenskaya talks with Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde in the lobby for quite a while, annoying Mr. Crum. While Mr. Bogenskaya has a high regard for Eddie's coaches, Mr. Crum is at the top of his shit list. Not surprisingly, Mr. O'Brien now occupies the number two slot on that list. Mr. Crum, not wanting any further confrontation, hides out in his office, waiting for Mr. Bogenskaya to leave.

To read quite an aggressive confrontation between Mr. Crum and Mr. Bogenskaya, read *Eddie, The Sophomore Year*.