

Thanksgiving 1964

By Tom Peters

As thanksgiving approaches, I'm always haunted by the holiday when I was 15 years old. My best friend and I had such a lust for driving (being from Detroit in all) that we took to stealing cars off used car lots. Back in the early 60s, Chevys had a weird ignition that if the owner left the key holder in the unlock position it could be started without a key. So, my friend I found a chevy station wagon in such a vulnerable state and helped our ourselves to a little joy ride down Fort St. Our plan was to ride around a bit then return the car to the spot we took it from. It was thanksgiving so no one was around at the car dealer and Fort St. was only busy with holiday traffic.

We both had to be home for the big dinner at 3:00 so as we were returning the vehicle and suddenly, I noticed a police car in the rear-view mirror. I had a fast turn unto a side street and was noticed.

Busted! Into the back seat of the police car that smelled of cigarette smoke and that strange smell of well-oiled gun metal.

Our fathers were called to the station. Both of us got cracked alongside our heads to satisfy the policemen present and we were let go in the hands of our angry dad's

"How can you do this to your mother!!! Slaving over a stove all day and you're out stealing cars for Christ's sake!

Once home, the contrast of the legal smell of the police station to the warm aroma of a Thanksgiving meal with parents so mad they could barely contain themselves.

They kept my crime quiet during the festive meal, but I couldn't make eye contact and was not looking forward to dessert. Was it going to be pumpkin pie or a shame-on-you staring contest?

The warm spicy pie and cool delicious whip cream came and went. I was glad to help clean up but the shame lasted to this day, years after my mother and father are gone.