

I was teaching Journalism at a College in Vermont and my son was a student there at the time. It is important to remember as it becomes relevant to the story.

My sister, my two nieces and I went on holiday in Boston. We spent the days sightseeing, seeing the swans, walking the Freedom Trail, visiting many of the revolutionary sights, seeing the ocean, eating seafood. I left my son home alone, first time ever. After the third day, he called. Seems the cat (Ziggy Marley) and the turtle disappeared overnight. (My puppy PooBear and the other cat Pink Floyd were where they were supposed to be.)

I was worried. I asked questions. Did he have people over? What time did he discover they were missing? Did he come and go often?

After assuring me that no party had taken place, I advised him to call the police since he seemed convinced that they had been stolen (of course, nothing else had been taken). The police did come and a statement was taken.

The next morning, Ziggy was found, shivering in the bushes as it had rained overnight. The turtle was still missing. I was relieved as Ziggy was for all his life my favorite (he and PooBear).

The trip ended and I came home. (As an aside, yes, I did find the empty keg in the backyard, hidden in the bushes. I did not say anything and a couple of days later, it disappeared.) Mr. T was still missing and I was preparing to ditch the aquarium as it took up a lot of space. I came down the stairs as I did every morning, some three weeks later, and there, under the dining room table, was Mr. T. Just hanging. No one bothered him, no dog, no cat, just dilly dally-ing there.

I put him back in his home and fed him.

As was my want, every day I made coffee for myself before work and read the paper. About six weeks later, in the police blotter, was this item:

Police called to the home at 17 Rockefeller Blvd. Cat and turtle missing.

Too funny but very useful. I cut it out and took it to College with me. I asked the Criminal Justice teacher if he would help me. I showed him the blotter. He came to class so we could explain and teach budding journalists how to use the blotter to ferret out a story. After questions and further explanations, the students were to write an article based on what they had learned.

As you can imagine, many students figured out that this actually had happened and many of my students knew my son. So, I offered extra credit if they could discover anything about the party that did not take place. Needless to say, said son was not very happy but he never admitted to the party. Took him years to say, well yes, there was a party. Duh, like I had not figured that out.

Mr T lived many years. He, unfortunately, did not make the trip to Colorado, living out his years on a farm where he could roam free. Ziggy, PooBear and Floyd did make the trip. PooBear died after 12 years of an embolism, he was lovely and I miss him. Ziggy lived 19 years and died two years ago. Floyd is still with us, at 19 but moving slow and looking a little worse for wear. I have added Stevie Nicks to the clan, she is going strong.

Kids, they never stop surprising you.

