

“A Delinquent Boy, no name given.” Manuscript contributed by Anthony Sorrentino, ca. 1920’s.

After that happening at the Jackson School, when we shit in the teachers desk, and they tried to get the right guys to see who did it, the raiding of the school and all of that vulgar thing well we decided that instead of going to the Parental School we were going B.G., and we weren't being treated right in school and they give us bum raps, which were real good ones, so we started to bumming school, at the working school I used to get high marks, in arithmetic (sic), english, and spelling I used to be A-high in them, Geography I used to flunk in that, I don't know why I just didn't seem to like Geography, I wasn't so good at it but I used to pass in it, I used to start a lot of fights in the school room, and if some guy got snooty, we would take him out in the dressing room, and there would be a lot of comontion (sic) going on and the teacher would come back there, to see what the hell was all about and she would find out that we were fighting, and she would take us by the ear, and she would take us over to Mr. Hedges the principal of the school and he would give us a lecture, saying that little boys like you should get along in school and you should co-operate with each other, and not fight, you should help one another out, and that's the right way to do it, and we used to tell him that he was full of hot air, and that the guy got snooty with me, and that he wasn't going to get away with it, and he used to tell us that we were bad and he tell us to behave ourselves or that he have to ship us to the bad boys school, the bad boy's school were (sic) is that at, so he said well we'll ship you to the Dante school if you don't behave yourself, so then we started to cry, and told him that I didn't want to go to the Dante Sohool I figured that it was a jail, I didn't know that it was just a school just on the other.side of Halsted, so they took us back to the room, and he told the teacher that we were going to behave ourselves and that we promised, and we didn't show up in the school the next day, I used to tell my mother

that I went to school but I didn't, I used to go to the Carnival, there used to be a Carnival that they used to have on the streets, and I still remember of going to see a man with a horse's tail, and he had a little stub just like a horse has on his tail, so we were going to see it, and we knew it was a lot of bull shit, but we never did go for any of that crap, that they used to pull at the Carnivals so we went in there, OH! look at the horse tail, we looked in there and we thought the guy was going to show us a big bushy man, and he didn't so we got mad because, so we said it was just a lot of horse shit, so he said after awhile, if all the ladies will kindly step out, we have for the men something very important, and if the little boys will step out to, so we were little stubborn (sic) guys, and we started to argue with the guy, so finally he said oh what the hell let the little guys stay, they don't know anything, and he showed us the dead skeleton (sic) of a man, and he claimed it was supposed to be a hundred year old, and it was actually the body of a dead man, I don't know how they got it that way, then he showed us the penis (sic) and the nuts of the man, and they were all dried up, and we looked at that and it was a crude sight, so then he said well you can look at yourself, and how you are going to be when you die, you dry out, and when you are buried in the cemetery (sic) you will be just bones and you'll fall apart so we started to hang around these Italian sausage (sic) stands, and Mike used to get the women to chase him and I used to stick my hand in under the canvass, and if I couldn't get it under there I used to cut it with a knife, and we used to take the cigar box full of change, and we used to empty the damn thing, and the people used to throw money in there and we used to pull it out and they couldn't understand the damn thing, and they think that the husband took it, and the husband would think that the wife took it, but all in all they started to getting wise, and they started to losing money so they started to put it in their pockets, so we spoiled that racket, boy those Carnival used to be a

good thing for us, so finally we decided to see if we could locate something good, so we started to screwing around the real estate where my grandfather used to get his checks, we used to go in there and we set down, and we would wait and we never did get a chance to get in the drawer, were (sic) she held the cash.

So one day we decided we were going to raid the back of Romano's while she was in there, Mike Epilito and I, we were waiting in there until customers come in there, and we would tell them, that my grandfather was coming in to cash a cheek, and she just let us in there because we were just kids and she thought that we weren't harmful but she didn't know that we were after her cash drawer where she held all of the cash, she didn't know that we had that idea, she used to keep watches in the back so we went back there and we wound up with about fifty watches, we just used to give them away, but we used to keep the ones that were gold such as twenty one jewel cases, or I would turn them over to my father and my father used to sell the gold or the watch or what ever it's value was worth, he didn't know where it was coming from, we just told them that a bunch of kids had them and that they gave us a sack of them, and we took them, and the old man fell for that one, but for the diamonds he didn't he wanted to know where we took the diamonds from because he wanted to return them but he never did, we took them from a jewler (sic) on Halsted next to the Twelveth (sic) St. Store, we just walked in there and the jewler (sic) asked us what we wanted, and we said that we were waiting for my mother very low so that the women wouldn't hear us and she would say those are not my boys, and he said that is all right stick around and he would wait and keep an eye on us, and Shokas who was smaller than me and Mikie was then behind the case getting all of the diamonds, and looking for a gold ring with my and his enital (sic) on it so that we could wear it and he come over and he would show me a gold

ring and I would say no put it back it's a little to large, get another one, so we finally wind up taking these pretty stones, so we walked out of the Jewelry store with them in our pocket, with about eight or nine diamonds apiece, and I think that the lowest diamond there was worth about forty five dollars, and we walked out and we turned on Halsted and Taylor and we run smack into my father, with the diamonds on us and he told us where in the hell did you get them things, and he thought that maybe they were from the ten cent store, so we told him that some guy in a jewelry store give them to us, so right away he knew that they were diamonds, he turned one upside down and he looked at it, so he took them all from us, he wanted to take the little gold ring with my initial (sic) on it, and I wouldn't do it, I wouldn't give it to him, and he let me keep that, so he told me to go to the store where we got them, I told him that I didn't want to go there so he said so you stole them, and he kicked the hell out of me and he beat Mike to, so he said go home and I'll take care of you when you come in, well I expected a beating, so he come home and he asked me if I had any more, and then I told him that he took them all, so he looks at the little gold ring that I had, so he said if that jeweler finds out they will throw you in jail for stealing diamonds, so he told me that I better give him that gold ring, and then I told him that there was a lot of rings like this, and that he wouldn't know so he told me to keep the ring, and Mikie had a ring he had one with an E on it and I had one with a B for Bovenzo, so after we made the Jewelry store we were still broke so we said lets go back to Rocco LaMonte and we said that we had to make the joint, we were in there from about 10:30 in the morning to until 1 in the afternoon, and people come in there cashing checks left and right, we got tired so we walked a little ways further down the street and we seen a grocery store, I opened the door very easy, and they had a little press button on the bottom of their cash drawer, and we couldn't open the thing. So by walking into the store and making noise the fella come out and we bought a can of

tomatoe (sic) paste, and we paid him the nickel and we found the number of it and then we went back then we tried it again and we couldn't open it, he must of got it wrong, so we bought another can of tomatoe (sic) paste, and told him that my mother wanted two cans, and still the guy didn't catch on what it was all about, then I looked at the guy and he pressed the first and the two back ones he pushed them all the way back, and there was no bell on that drawer, so we grant out so as soon as the guy went in the back, we got back in there and we opened the door easy, and we wound up cleaning the drawer of about ninty (sic) dollars, in them days they used to have pleny (sic) of money in the drawers, so we walked out even with the pennies, so we weren' satisfied so we said lets go over to Rocco's place so she had her last customer in there, so as soon as he left she was wriggling on the chair she had to go to the toilet, so we caught her in the right spot, and she had her keys in the drawer, so as soon as the customer got up and started to walk out, she headed for the back room right away she had to go to the toilet in the back, the guy went out the door and Mike leaned over the counter and turned the key and opened the drawer, and there was a lot of money I guess there must have been five or ten thousand dollars in the drawer, so Mikie just reached there and got one little stack, which were mostly five dollars in bills, and a couple of tens we took that and we wanted to get somemore, I was so excited I put it and then I stuck some of it in my shirt, and then he said wait I'll give you some more and I said No lets go that's enough, and I had too much money for a little kid of my age, so we went out and he finally caught up to me and he told me not to stack on him and he said we'll split even, so I guess that she never did miss that money unless she counted it up but she was short about one hundred and thirty dollars and she didn't know it was missing, and she never had any idea that we took the money, the back door was locked and the keys were just like she left them, so she couldn't accuse us of it, so we finally we went between two buildings and we started to split the

money, Mikie thought that I was holding out on him I guess I was counting it out for him to fast, so I traded with him, so he counted it up and found out that he still had the same amount so we put it in our shoes so we wound up with good ideas in going to the 12th St. store to buy some shoes and to buy a suit and a hat and shirt and ties and every thing and we come home and then we told my mother that the school give us these things and when we got to the 12th St. store we started to steal these things we would put on a pair of shoes and we would throw our old ones under the counter we would pick up some old receipts (sic) and get some wrapping paper which you had the privelge (sic) of getting to wrap up your old shoes so we would get some other new shoes and then wrap them up, and the house dective (sic) never did catch on what we were doing, so then we would go over to the shirt place and get some shirts and then we would wind up with stockings so then we went over and we bought a suit and I remember I bought myself my first pair of long pants suit and boy I couldn't wait until Sunday to put them on, and I think that I paid about seven and a half buck (sic) for the suit.

When I come home with all of the clothes my mother was wondering wher (sic) I had got them, and then I told her that it was given to me by the school, well she didn't say anything, in fact they couldn't locate the person that lost something and I would go up there and say that I lost it, and she would go up there and ask if I had gotten anything from the school and they would say yes that I was up there in the lost and found department, and she didn't know what the lost and found department was, so she just figured that they give it to me, because she didn't know to read or write in English, so I come home and told her that they give nice clothes in school then I told her that they give me some long pants becauce (sic) they want to see the boys in long pants, I had to bring up some alibi, so finally she agreed and I finally convinced her that I had gotten it from the

school, and I used to go out in the alley and then I would come back and tell her that I found five dollars so I come home and I got my hands pinched because I was finding too many five dollar bills in the alley and I told her that I couldn't help it, so then I said that I better out that out, so I used to put all of my money behind the piano, my sister and my mother used to polish the piano and my brother used to hid (sic) behind the piano and they claimed that they never found that little pocket book that was way in the crack with all the money in it until one day my old man caught me with the whole works, I was counting it in the house and he come in and he caught me and I told him that it belonged to ma, so he took it away from me every time that I had money he never did hit me so he took the money and he went up the ----- pool room and he had a lot of fun with my dough and that used to burn me up and when he wanted to give me a quarter I used to throw it at him you know after a person is used to twenties and fifties or a hundred dollars and you give him a quarter or even a kid he gets disgusted at a quarter, I wanted more money so that I could go to Lincoln Park and get rides on the horses, and we always used to ride the horses at Lincoln Park, there was a horse that we used to call Snow ball I used to have a white horse, so one day I kicked the horse with my heels and he didn't like it and the horse started to bulk, so the guy comes running over and said I better give you a gentler horse, and it used to take an hour to get along that little pool, they just used to drag around and then some times they would come over and grab a hold of them and bring them around, Mikie didn't like that we used to get about ten dollars worth of tickets and we used to go around and around we had our photographs taken on the horses, just like as if we were jockies, we had a lot of money to burn and we had a lot of friends because we had a lot of money to burn, we used to ride the horses for hours until we were bow legged, we used to go down there and they would take snow ball out of the barn because he wouldn't be out there and he would give him to me and I used to

go around and around I would ride that son ob (sic) a gun until about three hours, and when I would get through with him he would take him right back to the barn because the horse was tired, when they bring the horse around there is about twelve of them in a row, and when they come back they would come right up to the hitching post but not snow ball he would just go around and around, one time a kid wanted to rid (sic) snow ball, he had some tickets so I said OK, I stopped the horse, and I let him go around once So I let him rid (sic) Snow-ball just once around, and I had a hell of a time this guy that takes care of the horses went away, and this horse was going around and around and he would, stop at the hitching post, and he got a big rid for a nickel, so finally they got Snow ball in and I was passing up and down trying to get on snowball and I had a lot of tickets yet so finally I got tired of riding and I give the rest of the tickets to the kids around there, and they split them up, we threw some of the tickets in the air and we would watch them scramble for them, and we went around looking at the birds the lions and monkeys and in the mean time we had ideas on what we should take, we sat down and we seen a couple of people, I guess they were just married and she had her purse over there and we were playing around, and we finally got the purse and we walked away we got about ten or twenty dollars out of it, finally the truant officer got in our hands, I was about nine years old then, the truant officer, said that if I didn't go to school she was going to send me to the Parental, and I told them that I would go back to school, and all the girls and the guys would look at me and they would say there is that bummer, and that would make me fell ashamed of myself of them all going to school and they all had high marks so then I started to go to school and I quit going around with Mikie for awhile, this way I could get along if I was alone, and he went alone then to he had no body to go with him and we were just friends, so finally he goes to L. Klien and steals a purse and gets knocked off and he gets sent to the Parental school and they tried to make him say who was the

other guy but he told them that there was another guy but they couldn't pin anything on me because I was in school so I had a strong alibi so they waited and waited and finally I got disgusted with no money or no nothing so I decided that I was going to steal a purse well in the mean time I didn't know that this place was on guard so I walked in and they just kept on looking at all the little kids that walked in, and they would trail them, and they were trailing me so I went behind the counter and I got a purse, and I got caught right in the act, so they took me to jail and that was my first trip to jail, so they told me that they would call up my father to come over and get me, so I went to school the next day, I think that I was in the fifth or in the sixth grade, I goes in there, and I was sitting in there, and the teacher told me to recite something, and I told her to go to hell, and that I wasn't going to recite anything so I told her that I wanted to go home and she said that I wasn't going home, and there was a guy with a bald head, and I didn't know who he was and I had a bald head too they cut all of my hair and then Mikie said hey Willie what are you doing, and then I said what no wonder I couldn't find you home, so the teacher got disgusted and she balled one of the officers, and we were talking and she told him that she couldn't keep us quite (sic), and then she told us that we were in the Juvenile, so finally this guy grabbed us by the ears and separated us, so they transfered (sic) me up to the second floor, so finally two days later, Mikie goes to court, and I was wondering why.

I was wondering why Mikie went to court with me, never dreaming that they were waiting to catch me so that they could sentence us together because Mikie said that I went with him on a lot of crimes together with him, so I denied it and I told them that this was my first crime and the first time I ever stole anything, so I told them that I didn't want to steal at first, I just wanted to look at it, I thought some one lost it, they knew that I was lying because I went behind the

counter and got it, so my father was in the court room, and he said that I was a big robber and that I didn't want to listen to reason and that I would bum school and that I didn't want to obey my mother and that is what I get for hanging around with this little crook, and he pointed to Mikie, so the Judge told him that they were going to send me to a training school, and then I told them that they couldn't do that, and I told them that I wanted to go home, and I told them that I would run away from there, so they said that they would ship me to St. Mary's training school on the first bus that was leaving and then I told them that I would get back, and not to worry about that, so I cursed the old man in the court room, and I threatened everybody in the court room, so they sent me to St. Mary's and I thought that it was a place with big bars and everything, and Mikie was sent there to, finally when we got down there, we were brought up in front of Sister Rose, and she was the head sister down there, and they got Military drilling, and all of that, and we played baseball and everything, and there was a lot of competition, (sic) and they had a lot of championships in all sports, and I was too small to get in the sports but not too small to get in that damned drilling, I spent about one year in the place and I ran away about twenty two times, and I got away a couple of times,, and when I got home my old man grabbed a hold of me and we walked all the way to 1065 Polk street where Mikie lived he had Mikie by the ear, and he pulled Mikie's ear all most off and Mikie was hollering hey my ear, he wanted to take me back, and then I told him go ahead and I'll run away again, and my mother told him to keep us home and she didn't want us to go back she wanted us to stay home, so they brought us back.

Captain Kennedy called me in, and he told me listen Bill we treat you nice in here, and we give you every thing that you want, so why don't you behave yourself, why don't you be a nice boy your always getting licked, and I was just wishing that my old man would stay there all the time

because I knew that I was going to get that licking and I didn't want it, I had no rosin to put on my hands to knock the sting off my hands, he had a strap about a yard long and about an inch and a half thick, and that was genuine leather black, and they called it the black snake, and he took the black snake out of his pocket and he knocked the hell out of us I got used to that, so he called me out in front of all the boys so that he would make all the other boys behave, and then he hit me on the hands, and he told me to count and then I started to count and then I got to about five hundred and then I lost tract (sic) and then he told me to started all over again, and then I told him what the hell do I give a damn, you could hit me all day, and then he hit me over the head, with the strap and then I called him a dirty son of a bitch, so he got tired and then he called Little Mike and he told him to come over, and he started to cry and he held out his hand and then he would jerk it back and he hit himself in the leg, and he got madder, and he then held it out again and Mike started to cry, Ma! Oh Ma! he thought that his mother was going to come over and stop that and then Captain Kennedy told him to hold out his hand, he was getting mad he hit himself about four times in the leg, so finally Kennedy got mad and he grabbed Mikie around the neck, and he bended him over his knee and give him about fifty on the ass, and Mike was screaming bloody murder, when a guy hollers like that he don't get much, and if you don't holler he will just hit you all day, so finally he started all over again and he asked me what was your count so I told him to forget about it, and then I told him when you get tired of hitting me then you can leave me alone, my hands were numb and I didn't feel it, so that is why I was getting snooty with him, so he started to banging away, and he got to about two hunred (sic) and then he quit, and then he said all right let this be a lesson to you, and then I told him that is no lesson to me, I'll run away again, what do you know about that he said you think that your smart so he hit me over the head again so I cursed him again, he was going to make me miss my meals, so I wouldn't even stand

in line would just walk in and eat, so they decided that they were going to get rid of me they were going to send me back home, they didn't want me there, so we promised to be good, so one day we were standing in line, and they were calling the guys that were supposed to get whipped on the hands, and right away when he called me out of line, and me not knowing that I wasn't on the list, I hollered what the hell did I do now, that I should get whipped, I said is this getting to be a habit with you to call me out, and then he said no it's nothing like that, so he said you didn't do anything today, so he asked the boys and none of them answered, in the school room there was Charley Stampo, a fella that I used to go around when he got to be a little older, the teacher was insulting the Italian race, so Charley said who discovered America, and she said Christopher Columbus, (sic) who invented the wireless telegraph, and she answered Marconni, so then he said what the hell do you call them Irishmen, and she got mad and she threw the inkwell at him, and he ducked and some guy got him right on the head and then she started to cry and I was laughing, I said well she shouldn't insult the Italians, after they're all right So Charley didn't get anything for getting snooty with her, just because I laughed she told me to go down and tell the captain, about this time I was down there about a year and a few months, and the captain was getting tired of hitting me every day, I was down stairs waiting in the toilet so finally captain Kennedy come in and he said what do you want, and then I told him that the Sister send me down, for about five hundred cracks, and then he laid what did you do and I told him that I just giggled that was all so then he told me to go and pick up all the paper up in the yard he said I'm tired of licking you, and then he told me here is some candy, so then I picked some paper for about a half an hour, so then he told me Ok go in the toilet and bank (sic) up your hands against the post and get them red so I did and I got them red so then he told me to put some water around my eyes, hell I never did cry, so I went back into the room, and then the captain comes in and he

said well I give him two hundred (sic) cracks, and she said two hundred cracks, I only send him down for two, so I said well teacher I might just as well make it a good measurement for you, I said two isn't enough, so then she said if you don't behave yourself, I'll have you go out and get some more, so I said a baloney under my breath, when the captain left she said to me I think that I'll have you come to school during the vacation time, over there we to have a vacation just like the public schools outside, so then I told her your not going to keep me in any school, not on your life there well be a tornado around here, so she said well we'll see, were going to send you to a reform school, your not going to send me to any reform school your going to send me home that is the only place that your going to send me so we finally got tired of mopping around there I was there for about a year and a half, I was out there playing in yard and they calls my name that was about eleven o'clock in the morning, and then they called Mike Epolito, so then I wondered why in the hell they called him for we were playing marbles, and then they said going home, we passed Captain Kennedy like as if he was standing still, we went up to the clothing place we put on two pairs of pants, we were stealing an extra pair of pants, Mikie couldn't button his jacket, we stole some socks, we had a lot of extra things, we could rap up our own bundles, so we put some clothes in there to, we put on a little cap, and we put in an extra pair of shoes, so we raped (sic) them up in the bundle and we told them that they were our own clothes, so finally I walked out side to the grounds and I walked around there, and I saw some of the guys there was one guy that I didn't like over there so I socked him in that puss, and I told him let this be a lesson to you you ass hole for squawking all of the tine, so Mikie comes over and he flapped him in the puss to, and he was standing there crying, so we walked away and the captain was hollering at us, he was telling us come back come back here, so we didn't come back, we hit the road and through the tunnel, (sic) and Kenedy knew it was no use in coming to get us, so there was my old man,

and Mikie went home in a Yellow Cab his people come over in a Yellow Cab from Chicago and my father come over with Tom ----- you know who that is so Tom was out there, and he had his daughter there.

So I started to go out following Mike, so my father said are you starting already aren't you satisfied with doing a year and a half in jail without following each other again, so I said well I thought I was going with him, so he said no we're going in this car and there was this girl that had always said that she was my cousin but she was related to us you know as friends pisons, (sic) she put her arms around me, I used to sweat I used to blush, I wouldn't look at a girl if it meant to save me from something, I just couldn't stand it, because I blushed so much, and she just put her arms around me to see how much I could blush and I didn't like it, when I got out of the car Tommy give me a ten dollar bill, I look around and my old man wasn't looking, I reached around and grabbed it, and my old man turned around and saw me getting it, when I got in the house he took it away from me and he give me a buck, so I said I'll fix him for it, he takes my ten and he give me a buck, so I went over and I bought a dollars worth of candy while I was gone he was telling my mother I couldn't get him they wouldn't leave him home, then my mother was disappointed, he told me to wait in the hall way, so I snuck to the store on the corner, on Polk and Hermitage, and I bought a dollars worth of candy, before he knew what was happening I come in with a big bag and my kid brother and my kid sister and my older brother were in the house when I walked in and boy was my mother happy and then he told me where is the dollar that I give you and I told him that he wasn't going to get that, so I told him that I bought a dollars worth of candy, my mother wouldn't let him slap me because he wanted to slap me, and then I told him just wait until I get big, and you slap me, and he said if your not quite (sic) I'll slap you

right now, so I went out and he had a little black crow there he brought him from Melrose Park, we also had a white rat, I used to play with it all the time, its really a nice thing to have around the house it kills all the black rats it chased them away, so they had a big celebration there because I come home, my mother Tom -----his brother, the one that died, Mike -----, and some of the big shots of the pool room, Diamond Joe Exposito, was there, and boy I made a furtune (sic) that day, some give me five some give me twenties, all the money my father didn't get because I took it and handed it to my mother right in front of the old man, and they all came over to see me, because they all liked me, and I didn't know which was my real compa because one of them was my "compa" oh yes *** _____ was my "compa" he come over there and he give me a watch, one of these seventeen jewel Elgin watches it was a nice one, and I put it on and my old man wouldn't take that away from me, he called me on the side and he told me that he wanted me to take a walk with him, instead of giving me the money to get a suit he went and bought me one, because he knew that the old man would take the money from me, so I went home I decided to be a good boy, so they sent me to Cregeir School, and then I started in school again, that is where I meet Ethel _____ a little girl, and I started to be a good boy.