

Getting arrested was part of fundraising for the Unification Church

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Photo date and location unknown

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I have lost track of how many times I was picked up, or even locked up.

One that stands out happened in Memphis, Tennessee. This was after we broke through and started making good money in Memphis. (See my story under Spiritual Conditions for how that happened).

There was a nightlife section called Overton Square. It was a block or two around, and had lots of restaurants and bars. It was a mix of young folks, tourists and stubble-headed recruits from an army bootcamp. These guys frequented a bar where they served a house drink in a can the size of a paint bucket. They would wave these in the air and shout incoherently. Ah, youth.

Anyway, Overton Square was prime weekend rose territory. It was also run by a business association who wanted us 'cult flower-sellers' away from their area. So they hired a security guard, named Smoky, to patrol the area. It was always a dance, go half a block in, inside a bar (Smoky couldn't do anything if you were inside a place) dance out and to the next place real quick.

One Saturday night I wasn't quick enough. Smoky grabbed me and told me I was under arrest – citizen's arrest. He marched me to his office, closed the door. I don't remember if he handcuffed me. He might have.

It took a while for the police to show up. They nonchalantly put me in the back of their patrol car, spent some time talking to some young girls who apparently like cops, and then drove me to the Memphis jail. On the way they made it clear they didn't think this was a major arrest, the way Smoky did.

I was booked in to the jail on charges of "Selling without a permit." Escorted to the elevator with two other newly arrested guys and a deputy who had our papers. On the way up, he looked at them and said "Harley, selling without a permit. What were you selling? Guns, drugs?"

"Flowers."

"Whatt!!!!"

"For my church."

"WHAAATT!!! I've got a jail full of muggers and drug dealers and they're putting you in here for flowers? What the?"

They put me in a cell in an empty wing, far from the other holding cells. I could hear people whooping and hollering down the hall. "Wooooo! Call da po-lice, man! Haha!" Saturday night at the Memphis Jail.

I seem to recall there was even a Time magazine in my cell. As usual, I fell asleep for a while. Usually, getting arrested, I hoped my captain wouldn't come to bail me out for several hours at least. Falling asleep on MFT was no problem.

Did you ever get arrested in the course of your mission? What happened?