

I was nine years old and walking myself to school one morning when I heard the unfamiliar sound of a prepubescent boy calling my name. I had heard my name spoken out loud by males before, but it was most often by one of my brothers, my father, or a teacher, and it was usually followed up with a shot to the side of the head.

I turned around and spotted Jason Safirstein. Jason was an adorable fifth-grader with an amazing lower body who lived down the street from me. I had never walked to school, had a conversation with, or even so much as made eye contact with Jason before. After lifting up one of my earmuffs to make sure I had heard him correctly, I nervously attempted to release my wedgie while waiting for him to catch up. (A futile effort, as it turned out, when wearing two mittens the size of car batteries.)