
Praise for *Banned from California*

Foshee's life fascinates, and his tales crackle on the page. ... In this lively and moving biography, a vital contribution to the history of LGBTQ life and activism in 20th century America, veteran reporter and broadcaster Steele memorializes the life of Jim Foshee, who first fled Idaho for California at age 15 in 1954 and went on to witness and experience the front lines of the nascent gay liberation movement.

~ *Publishers Weekly*, *Booklife* "Editor's Pick" for Outstanding Quality

I was like, "Oh well, here I'm going to read about some guy—I don't know who he is—some gay guy." And you know what? I was captivated from the very beginning! It was really great! This kid had the gumption to go hitchhiking across states and get into all of these adventures—like how brave was he as a kid! He kept coming and going because every time he would go back home, they'd lock him up in a mental hospital, so he'd run away and go to California again. This kid did crazy stuff, I'm not kidding you. Amazing story!

~ Lisa Pedersen, co-host of *Out of Whack* podcast

Steele's excellent organization of his biography adds further insight, bringing the mid-century life of an American gay man into vivid relief and painting a detailed picture of an era when homosexuality was illegal in many parts of the country. ... Overall, Steele does an excellent job of presenting the story of an activist and making it clear why his story matters.

~ *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review) for Exceptional Merit

The book arrived on a Saturday, and I just sat down, and like bam! I was 50 pages in and was like, "Oh, I don't want to stop." And then I was reading it in bed, and I read it the next day, and I literally read it over three days. It is a fascinating story. I absolutely enjoyed reading it cover to cover. The book is an incredible read! ...

At 22 years old he was imprisoned. There is so much detail in those sections of the book of what prison life was like and working on a chain gang in Texas in 1960. And it's remarkable that he even lived to get out and tell the story.

~ Daren Stehle, host of *Think Queerly* podcast

A fascinating biography. Readers have a clear image of a boy, defiant and flawed, innocent and rebellious, a complicated protagonist reminiscent of Holden Caulfield in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. ... A vivid story of the modern gay civil rights movement with court cases and uprisings long before the well-known Stonewall riots, providing readers more depth into this history.

~ Nicholas Villanueva, *Out Front Magazine*

It's a fabulous book about a gay-rights pioneer you've never heard of—but you should have heard of him. He chose to live his life as an openly gay man starting in the early 1950s when there were virtually no openly gay people. Jim spent most of the first part of his life in institutions from an orphanage when he was a toddler, to being in juvenile detention, to then being put in the state mental hospital where he spent years of his adolescence. Then he goes to prison in his early twenties in the State of Texas as an out effeminate gay man, as a queen let's say. It's a terrific book, and I highly recommend it!

~ **Adam Sank**, host of *The Adam Sank Show* podcast

This is the enlightening biographical tale of Jim Foshee, a 14-year-old runaway whose stories of “persecution, redemption and the gay civil rights movement” use the culture and history of homosexuality in America as a backdrop for his many travels. There are also many anecdotes of people Foshee met and places he traveled to—drag queens, hustlers, good cops and bad cops pass through his life. The book also chronicles his contributions to the gay community.

~ **Lynn Childs**, *Seattle Gay News*

Incredible! This story is amazing because you get a character, you get a person that could be me or you or you that's listening right now, and you kind of get to walk in his shoes and navigate life the way that he does with all of this adversity and all of these challenges surrounding him; and it's insane. It's really, really, really fascinating!

~ **Marko & Tony Critellis**, co-hosts of *Relationship* podcast

Witness from the persecution—how one gay soul lived to tell. *Banned from California* is inspiring and edifying. It is handsomely assembled, has many vintage black-and-white pictures of locales and individuals and is written with economy and clarity. Not surprisingly, and though easy and comfortable to read, it is meticulously annotated.

~ **Dr. Lawrence D. Mass**, *Medium.com*

Very smooth and comfortable read. A fascinating adventure tale of a life with twists at every turn. Provocative and compelling. What an incredibly open and honest connection with a culture that gets far too little exposure on such an intimate and personal level. Jim's story is an adventure of a lifetime, but one that came with many struggles and enlightenments.

~ **Charles Pearson**, *eBay Reviews*

For more information visit the book's website: BannedCA.com

BANNED
from California

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-Jim Foshee-
Persecution, Redemption, Liberation
... and the Gay Civil Rights Movement

Robert C. Steele

Wentworth-Schwartz Publishing Company, LRCS

Banned from California -Jim Foshee- Persecution, Redemption, Liberation ... and the Gay Civil Rights Movement

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Author's Note

In the 1990s I began work on this biography about the life of Jim Foshee.

I met Jim in 1973. We worked together in the gay liberation movement of the 1970s. Eventually we became friends, and he came to trust me with the stories and secrets of his life. Jim was a story teller who loved to talk about his life's adventures and misadventures.

I interviewed him on several occasions. The quotes included in this book come from those interviews, interviews of other individuals plus my own memories.

Accounts and facts covered in this book are supported by historical records; articles from old gay newspapers, newsletters, periodicals, and journals; government documents; letters; and various audio recordings.

Banned from California is Jim's means to speak about his life. His words are all placed in quotation marks.

Jim was born in 1939 and lived his life as an out gay person throughout the last half century of the 1900s. This biography details his life and times, which spanned more than six decades. He was flawed and complicated, yet he survived the obstacles in his life.

Jim Foshee noted during an interview: "This is my story. I can remember a lot of experiences, but at my age I can't recall them all perfectly. Most of my memories are very clear; a few are vague. After all, a lot of this happened a long time ago."

Robert C. Steele

Chapter 1

California Here I Come

Jim Foshee had been planning his escape for months. The year was 1954. The 15-year-old was determined to put 800 miles between himself and his family.

The sunshine of California beckoned. Jim recalled, “I learned that California was the place to be. The parishioners at my parents’ churches always ranted and raved and claimed that California was the place where all the queers and fruits were located, so I figured that’s the place for me!”

The Idaho winter Jim had experienced during the previous six months had been bitter cold with lots of snow. Now the late spring weather still remained chilly in the mornings and even colder at nights.

Jim lived with his family in the small town of Ketchum, Idaho. It was founded in the late 1880s as a smelting center for the local mining district. In the late-1930s the world-famous Sun Valley ski resort began its multi-million-dollar operations a couple of miles away. Ketchum received the overflow of tourists who were unable to afford a stay in the elegant rental accommodations at Sun Valley.

Jim earned a small amount of money doing chores at Ketchum’s Sun Motel-Hotel, which his mother Fannie and her third husband owned. It looked like a large two-story ski lodge. The motel part was on the downstairs first floor where guests could drive up to the rooms facing the parking lot. The hotel part was upstairs and featured individual rooms and a bath at the end of a long hall. The Sun Motel-Hotel provided comfortable lodging at a reasonable price for people who didn’t want to shell out lots of money at swanky Sun Valley.

Banned from California

“I saved my allowances and earnings from the lodge for my big adventure. The school year had just finished, and I was heading to sunny California!” Jim slipped out at dawn with his small suitcase, jacket and his saved money. The teenager was setting out on an adventure that would redefine his life and put him in the midst of the civil rights struggle of gay people across the United States of America spanning a half century.



Figure 1: Sun Motel-Hotel, Ketchum, Idaho.

Jim’s gay journey started when he hitchhiked his way along the dusty highways of Utah and Nevada and through the desert of southern California. He thumbed his way into the Los Angeles metropolitan area and landed in Hollywood. For a star-struck teenage boy who knew he liked guys, he had arrived in the Land of OZ. However, the fun and excitement he anticipated didn’t match reality. It didn’t even come close.

“Hollywood wasn’t quite what I had imagined. It seemed rundown. I wondered where all the glamorous people were. I just knew that I’d meet at least one or two movie stars. I thought they might even put me in the movies. But the stars were missing in action.”

Jim spent his day visiting tourist sites. At night he hung around the Sunset Strip, that 1.5-mile stretch of Los Angeles in an unincorporated part of West Hollywood just east of Beverly Hills. This was the playground where Hollywood royalty went to blow off steam at restaurants and clubs such as Ciro's, Café Trocadero and Mocambo.

For teenagers and acting hopefuls, the Strip was more like The Boulevard of Broken Dreams, a place to wander and wait to be discovered. For mobsters such as Bugsy Siegel, Mickey Cohen and Meyer Lansky it was a part of their West Coast money-making empire.

Jim's California adventure kicked off in earnest in front of a nightclub on the Sunset Strip called the Melody Room. There he spied Bunny emerging from the club swishing to the hilt. Bunny was a man who liked to dress like a woman at home and anywhere else thought to be safe. In drag Bunny looked like a splashy woman in her twenties. All of the homosexuals and crossdressers who knew Bunny referred to him as "her" and "she."

On this particular night Bunny was dressed in a conservative suit, having just conducted business inside the nightclub.



Figure 2: Melody Room nightclub where Jim met Bunny on the sidewalk in front. Sunset Blvd. & Larrabee Street on the Sunset Strip. 1955. [Bison Archives/HollywoodHistoricPhotos.com]

“I saw Bunny waiting for a taxicab, and I just knew this person was a gay kindred spirit.”

Bunny worked at a department store near her home she shared with her partner Dutch. “That day I began learning that gay men never revealed their last names to other gay people, and oftentimes they hid behind monikers instead of using their real first names. I remember that Dutch’s real name was pretty common like Bill or Mike or something like that.”

Dutch worked as a computer expert making good wages. The computers Dutch worked on operated on vacuum tubes and punch cards, and they took up entire rooms at Dutch’s work offices.

Bunny had lived in four or five different cities before ending up in downtown Los Angeles. She and Dutch lived in an area bounded by Main Street and Hill Street with Broadway running through the middle. According to Bunny, downtown LA was the heart of the gay scene in the city.

Bunny was from Louisiana and spoke with a Cajun accent that sounded almost foreign to Jim.

“Bunny was delighted with me, ‘Oh, a little darlin’! You are so precious.’ She expressed concern that I should have been at home at that hour of night. So, I announced that I was visiting from out of town. Bunny was wary, ‘Oh no, you’re a runaway. My dear, you never should be living out on these streets.’”

The two already were becoming trusted friends. Bunny took Jim under her wing, and Jim found in her a mentor.

Dutch was on a trip out of town, so Bunny made her own decision to take Jim off the streets and give him safe haven in her home.

During Jim’s first day with Bunny she gave him a tour of the downtown area. Bunny and Jim walked a half dozen blocks or so from Bunny’s apartment to a wide-open park called Pershing Square. It covered an entire city block. In all four directions Jim gazed at the unobstructed views of downtown’s tall sky scrapers and businesses. Buried deep in the ground underneath the park was a three-level parking garage and bomb shelter.

“I’d never heard of such a thing in my life—a park located on top of a huge parking garage. As a young kid I couldn’t help but marvel at the novelty of it all. We walked around the park, and I admired the



Figure 3: Pershing Square, downtown Los Angeles. 1954.
[Bison Archives/HollywoodHistoricPhotos.com]

beautiful flowers and bushes and trees growing around its outer edges. The middle of Pershing Square reminded me of a big football field with no bleachers or goal posts or markings. That’s when I knew Los Angeles was going to be full of surprises.”

Bunny taught Jim about the harsh realities of being gay in the United States during that era and explained the risks gay people faced, even in the heart of the gay community in Los Angeles.

“She would point out to me various men she knew and explain that every one of them could be arrested, lose their jobs and careers and be reduced to absolute nothingness. They could be thrown into prison for years for the felonies of homosexual acts. Their names could appear in newspapers, and they’d have no rights according to the law. I realized that at any moment the police could ruin my life.”

This realization crystallized Jim’s thinking. He decided the threat of being scorned by society was not going to force him to live in the shadows or live a double-life like so many gay people were required to do.

“Instead of fretting that the cops would get me, I figured why worry. It freed me to do what I wanted. I never thought about getting old. For all I knew I’d live forever. I was carefree.”

“As we meandered around, Bunny pointed out gay bars in the area. We walked along Hill Street, and she told me about a homosexual

organization located in a shabby old building that we passed by. I never imagined that such an organization ever would exist.” The organization was ONE Incorporated. It was an influential group that sought to educate people about homosexuality through classes and periodicals that it published. It was a fleeting remark that day, but years later Jim’s curiosity would lead him back to the group’s office.

Bunny went to work in the daytime at a downtown department store while Jim walked all around the downtown area. He spent time in Pershing Square every day talking to all sorts of friendly people in the park. He also met gay people there and began searching for the man of his dreams.

Jim had been deprived of movies as a kid, but now all of a sudden here he was in downtown LA among theaters along Broadway that showed movies all day long. They were enchanting places with the smell of popcorn and captivating sounds from the screen. 1950s ushers escorted customers down the aisles with flashlights to direct them to their seats. Nobody talked. Jim felt like he was in a sacred place.

“I could spend the entire day at one theater pigging out on movies, three hits one after another for only fifty cents.”

During the day there were respectable crowds on the streets, but nighttime laid bare the more seedy and run-down aspects of the downtown area. At first Jim was unfamiliar with the streets, and they scared him. Strange people were on those streets. A smell of danger seemed to permeate the air. But Jim was young, and it was obvious he did not have any money, so he learned he could wander around without anybody bothering him.

Bunny’s rule was that Jim had to be back home before dark. She got home around 7:00 in the evenings. She would cook supper every night. Jim was not yet a good cook. Jim would clean the bathroom, straighten the house and then after dinner he would wash and dry dishes.

“After I finished drying dishes, I’d join Bunny in the living room. She’d relax and lounge around in women’s clothes. She’d read the evening newspaper, and we’d listen to radio shows like *The Shadow* and *Arthur Godfrey’s Talent Scouts* and *Our Miss Brooks*. This was a time when few households had a television set.”

“Bunny had collected a few records, and we played some of them on her phonograph player. I’d play the Nat King Cole song *Unforgettable* and lie on her couch dreaming away to those wonderful lyrics.”

Bunny would let Jim dress up in women’s clothes alongside her in drag. She entertained Jim with lots of high-spirited merrymaking. She performed drag skits for Jim as she pantomimed to her Rae Bourbon albums, including *Let Me Tell You About My Operation* featuring skits about Rae’s supposed sex change operation and *You’re Stepping on My Eyelashes!* showcasing some of Rae’s gay nightclub comedy skits.¹



Figure 4: Rae Bourbon albums, 1950s. [author’s collection]

Rae Bourbon was a man (Ray Bourbon) who had been a prolific entertainer in the pansy nightclubs of the 1920s and 1930s, which featured drag routines by female impersonators.² Rae then began recording and selling phonograph records of female impersonation routines.³ Earlier in life, Ray had worked as a minor character actor and extra in Hollywood, and in one silent movie Ray died in the arms of Rudolph Valentino who kissed Ray on-screen.⁴ Later in life, Rae performed with Mae West.

Bunny personally knew Rae Bourbon. Bunny and Rae had met inside the Melody Room nightclub, the same place where Jim had met Bunny on the street in front of the club. Bunny became a big fan of Rae and purchased some of the entertainer’s records. Rae Bourbon’s records made an initial early impression on Jim.

“Bunny told me that a lot of the bars and nightclubs that gay people patronized were owned by organized crime—and those included the Melody Room. I laughed at the rumors, but through the years I kept hearing the same claims about a lot of gay bars owned by mafioso types across the USA, so eventually I figured it had to be true.”

Bunny and Jim would talk the evenings away. Jim told her about his dreams of finding an older mature husband. Bunny explained that if Jim wanted to succeed in a life of love, Jim would have to entice those men by being terribly effeminate. In the 1950s the game most homosexuals and crossdressers played was a reflection of heterosexual role models—one person was supposed to be masculine and the other one feminine.

“At bedtime I felt special turning in for the night sleeping in my own private bedroom under bunny’s protection from the next room.”

“Bunny’s friend Trixie hung around a lot. She had a biting and sarcastic personality, and she constantly criticized Bunny’s drag performances. But she owned a nice Nash Rambler that she used for driving Bunny around while Dutch was using their car in Montana visiting his parents and relatives.”

Bunny was popular. On Friday night she and a couple of friends went out to a conservative gay bar where everybody minded themselves, dressed carefully in inconspicuous suits and ties, no flirting, no kissing, no makeup—do nothing that could attract the attention of undercover vice squad cops. Don’t be an obvious queen.

The next night was quite a contrast. Bunny hosted a private drag party in her home. A dozen guys were inside the house dressed in drag—even Jim. It was his first time Jim watched a bunch of queens camping it up.

“I got the distinct impression that none of Bunny’s close friends liked having me around and wished I’d just leave. But Bunny stuck by me and told them that she and I were like sisters and had fun in drag together—she thought I was adorable.”

After more than a week staying with Bunny, Jim returned to her home one late afternoon to find Bunny arguing with a guy. Jim realized that Bunny’s partner Dutch had returned. He was complaining about Jim being there, “I’m only gone two weeks, and you manage to drag home some stray kid. You’ve lost your senses—as if you ever had any.”

Bunny tried to protest, but Dutch didn't budge, "He's going!"



Jim's carefree life with Bunny was over. No more movies, parties, walks through downtown or long talks about gay life. Jim packed his suitcase and hit the streets.

"I'd messed up again. I was at a loss of what to do in Los Angeles now. I realized I'd better hightail it back home to Idaho. All of the money I'd spent going to the movies would have paid to get out of town and eat some food along the way."

He had no money for a hotel room, and the proprietors certainly would not rent to a 15-year-old.

He had hitchhiked into LA days earlier, and he would simply hitchhike back home now—if only he could figure out the maze of freeways that lead out of town. Jim decided that the big freeway entry lanes located downtown would be a good place to hitchhike. But the interchanges seemed to go on forever. If only he could manage to get out of LA, the rest of the trip would be easy to navigate.

Jim walked to a nearby park to pause a while to figure out what to do. "I saw a policeman, and all of a sudden I remembered that my mother always told me to trust the police, 'A policeman is always your best friend. They'll always help you.' I suddenly had this great idea. I walked up to him and asked where the police station was. The police had plenty of police cars running around the city. I told the officer that I'd like the police to give me a ride out of town, so I could hitchhike my way back home. He told me where the downtown LA police station was located. He even was nice enough to escort me there himself."

Inside the station the police realized that Jim was a runaway. He told them his name, and they told him to wait on one of the wooden benches. He smiled at his fine performance and change of luck.

"Before long two officers came down and met me. I was overjoyed about them helping me to get out of town. My mother was right."

In reality, these were juvenile detectives. The scene that played out next looked like a 1950s crime movie. The cops intended to get this unsuspecting runaway to start singing like a canary.

One detective had closely cropped hair—mean looking with the demeanor of a bulldog. The other guy was gentle and friendly and even got Jim a Coca-Cola to drink. One detective was nasty. The other was kind. Jim ignored the gruff guy and turned to the guy who was nice to him.

Both detectives threw questions at Jim one after another: What was he doing in the city? How long had he been there? He was a runaway, wasn't he?

Jim noticed the piece of paper lying on the table that read: All Points Bulletin—James “Jim” Foshee.

“They grilled me for what seemed like hours. I was a typical young teenager—not clever enough for them. They got me to admit that I really lived in Idaho and that I'd been in LA for a couple of weeks. And from there the game was all in the hands of my interrogators.”

“Do you have any money?” “No.”

“What have you been doing with your days here?” “Going to the movies.”

“How did you get the money to get into the movies?” Jim couldn't get Bunny mixed up in this, “I've been staying with my uncle.”

“Oh really. What's your uncle's name?” “Uncle Dutch.”

“Where have you been living with Uncle Dutch?” “At a tall hotel across from Pershing Square.”

“What room is it?” “I can't remember.”

“Who's this Uncle Dutch? How old is he?” “In his twenties.”

“Are you making money from guys to have sex with you?” “No. Not at all.”

“So, you've been living with this Uncle Dutch. He really isn't your uncle, is he?” “Well, Dutch isn't exactly my uncle, but he is.”

“This Dutch guy did things sexually to you, didn't he?” I played dumb and asked them what they meant. “He played with your dick, your pecker, your prick.”

The detectives turned up the heat, informing Jim that if he refused to tell them where Dutch lived, they would take him next door to a room where they would hook him up to a machine. It would tell them exactly what they wanted to know and would prove if Jim was lying. Things were going to get rough. The detectives told Jim that if he refused to cooperate, he would not be going back home to Idaho. But

if he revealed what he knew they would make sure he got back home safe and sound.

Jim explained that Dutch had gotten mad at him and made him leave his home, that Jim had walked around looking for a way to get out of Los Angeles and thought the police could help him.

The nice detective told Jim, “You don’t owe anything to this guy. He stranded you in Los Angeles. He didn’t even have the decency to give you a bus ticket back home.” The detective told Jim that Dutch had treated him bad, and he claimed that he never would treat a boy the way Dutch treated Jim. By this time with Jim’s delayed reaction, he started thinking the detective was correct—Dutch did do him wrong.

“Eventually the pressure and psychology wore me down. I wasn’t the strongest person in the world.”

Whenever the gruff detective asked questions, Jim would resist. But the nice officer was understanding and kept telling the gruff detective that Jim was a nice kid, that he was a good truthful boy. The detectives told Jim that as soon as he finished telling them the whole truth, they would take him home. They would not just merely take him to the edge of the LA metro area. They would put Jim on a train with a nice sleeping cabin to travel home in luxury. That sounded great to Jim.

The detectives brought in doughnuts as Jim explained to them where Dutch was located. They typed up a paper containing legalistic jargon and other technical words, which at that time Jim did not understand, such as “oral copulation” and “anal intercourse.” They used no simple words like “homo” or “queer” or any other words Jim easily would recognize.

As soon as Jim signed the document the juvenile detectives put him and his suitcase into a police car and drove off.

“I was happy to be on my way to the train station and then home. But they drove me instead to Los Angeles’s notorious juvenile hall. Obviously, we weren’t at any train station. Hoping against hope I asked them where we were at. Maybe they had to stop along the way. They stated that we were at juvenile hall. They said this was where they put boys, and I’d have to stay there while they completed the paperwork. Well, I guessed that sort of made sense to me.”

Guards locked up Jim in a large area with benches and a radio. Along the back were rooms with bunks. The doors to the outside all had small windows with bars.

When Jim walked in, the other kids saw him for what he was—an effeminate young teenager.

“They were the nastiest bunch of inner-city juvenile delinquents, real crooks and evil street kids. These were street punks—as dangerous and deadly as hardened criminals, and in fact many of them actually were already hardened criminals. I’d never been around people like them before. I was scared to death. They called me sissy and girl. They never hit me or hurt me, but they saw me as someone beneath them and someone to degrade.”

The boys seemed to be going through a stage where they felt proud of being in prison—or at least as close as they had come to prison. The delinquents emulated the Bowery Boys whose movies roused the kids’ bluster. The kids strutted around juvenile hall imitating the Bowery talk and bravado.

“To me these kids seemed like goofballs. I wasn’t interested in kids my own age. I’d always been attracted to older guys. It wasn’t that I disliked the guys, it was just that they were trashy young punks.”

Even though the boys were only in their mid-teens, they already had accumulated plenty of street smarts. The juvenile delinquents had quite the vocabulary of cuss words, many that Jim had never heard before. Since his folks were very religious, he was not allowed to say darn, gee or golly, let alone hell or damn. So instead, he created substitute words like foot or shoot—his two main swear words at the time.

Guards constantly watched over the delinquents. All of the juveniles attended school in the lockup’s classrooms, but they were always kept separate from older guys.

Jim felt lonely and out of place.

“These juvies ‘talked shit’ and claimed that you had to keep beating your meat until you came. They would look at each other’s hands and laugh and say that if you jacked off, hair would grow on your palms. So I carefully checked my palms to make sure no hair was starting to grow.”

“The showers were right across from my room. There was this older guy almost 17 years old who was getting ready to go to The Big

House as he called it. He was nude in the shower and had been nice to me. He wanted me to come and take care of him. He said he was going to have to go without it for a long time. So, I followed him to his room and gave him what he wanted. It was the only time I fooled around in juvenile hall.”

The days dragged by. No officials came to see Jim, and no one told him what was going on. He was in limbo. He had not been charged with anything thus far.

“I didn’t know anything about any rights. I figured I was kept in juvenile hall because I had committed a crime and that it was only a matter of time before I’d be charged. The authorities had told me that what I had done was wrong. I thought they could do anything to me they wanted.”

Finally one day a public defender showed up and explained to Jim that he would be making a court appearance the next day. Up until then Jim had no idea what was happening. Jim asked if he was in trouble. The guy told Jim no. All Jim had to do was go to court and tell the judge about his time in LA. Then Jim would get out of juvenile hall and go home.

The next day a social worker took Jim to the large courthouse building. Jim waited in a side room and, just like the police interrogation, the scene that unfolded in court looked like a made-for-TV drama.

“I watched them open the door, and all of a sudden we were walking right into a large courtroom full of strangers. I didn’t know if they were all there to view my case or were waiting for other cases. They immediately put me on the witness stand. The strangers in the courtroom audience kept staring at me.”

The prosecutor began by asking Jim if he knew the difference between good and bad and telling the truth or not. Jim replied yes.

Sitting directly in front of Jim looking right into his face was Dutch, whose eyes were pleading, “*Oh, I’m so sorry.*” Then Jim saw Bunny in back of Dutch dressed in a nice suit. She had tearful droopy eyes—like a poor basset hound.

“By this time, I’d concluded that the authorities had committed an injustice by lying to me and keeping me there all that time. I was mad.”

The prosecutor asked Jim to tell the court what happened. He wanted Jim to identify the person in the courtroom that Jim had been staying with in LA. In his statement to the jury the prosecutor used words like oral copulation. Jim was slow in recalling what that phrase and others meant, but when the prosecutor spelled it out in plain English the courtroom audience was shocked.

“All of a sudden I realized what the court was trying to do. I couldn’t let them do this to Dutch and Bunny. Dutch didn’t belong in jail.”

Jim let loose, “No! It didn’t happen! The police made me say it!”

The courtroom erupted. The prosecutor turned to Jim, “What do you mean it didn’t happen?”

Jim blurted out, “The police kept me in a room all night long and mistreated me! The police said if I told this story, they were going to send me home, and instead they put me in jail. I didn’t do nothing. I didn’t even go into that guy’s house.”

The audience leaned forward. Jim was embarrassed and started to cry. In later years court authorities mostly closed adolescent testimony from public view, but this was an era defined in part by public shaming in courtrooms across the country. There was no such thing as Miranda Rights at the time. And whether it was a police investigation, a criminal trial or a Congressional hearing, remaining silent or refusing to answer questions meant you must be guilty.

“I don’t know where I got blaming the police for this mess and suffering. But as I saw it, it was true. My friends—as my mother referred to the police—had gotten me into this mess and caused this suffering.”

The judge asked Jim, “Are you sure what you’re saying?”

The prosecutor said, “Your honor, I don’t understand this. We have a signed statement from this witness.”

The judge turned to Jim again and asked, “Are you sure that nothing happened?”

Jim denied everything, “I only saw that guy the last day I was there. I never even talked to him. Nothing happened.” The entire case had hinged on Jim’s word about Dutch. The court had no other witnesses.

Dutch’s defense attorney rose up, “Your Honor, I recommend dismissal of this case.”

The judge was not ready to admit defeat and called a recess. As Jim was leaving the stand the judge told Jim's social worker, "I want to see this witness in my chambers." Jim and the social worker waited in the anteroom, and after a couple of minutes they went into the judge's office. The judge sat at his desk, livid, "Look son, we know this guy did it. I know you lied. You've cost the state a lot of money." Jim thought to heck with the state, it wasn't fair for the judge to put all the blame on him.

The judge spoke, "We could have sent this guy up for decades and gotten this child molester out of the way. Instead, he'll end up free. For the life of me I cannot figure out why you would want to protect this pervert."

The judge added, "Now we can go back into court, and we can just disregard your testimony."

Jim replied, "No, I won't!" Jim refused to back down.

His Honor blew his top, "This is a disgrace. You're a disgrace! You can never come back here! I ban you from the State of California! You stay at home with your parents, young man. What you need is strong discipline. If I hear that you dare come back to California, I'll send you to jail for good!"

"I never considered whether the judge in reality could ban me from the state. I didn't stop to think that he might be bluffing to get me to stay put at home with my parents and behave myself."

"I thought to myself that the judge was like so many straight people who just assumed that if you're 15 years old, you were preyed upon by some pervert. Now my anger was transferred toward the judge. I just wanted to go home and finally get this nightmare over."

Back in the courtroom the judge dismissed the case.

An officer of the court escorted Jim to Idaho. Court authorities worried that if they left Jim by himself, he might take off and get into more trouble. He and his escort traveled by train with their own two tiny bunks and ordered food delivered to their compartment. The escort knew nothing about Jim's case other than Jim was a runaway kid whom the officer was supposed to keep in his sights.

Jim's mother and her third husband Fred picked him up at the Shoshone, Idaho train station about 70 miles away from Ketchum and Sun Valley. They showed no sympathy. His stepfather was stern, but he left Jim's discipline to Jim's mother—the opposite way that Jim

had been handled by his mother and her previous husband, Jim's first stepfather.

"Deep down, my mother always had known that I was homosexual or weird or different, but she wouldn't admit it since she was very religious. Homosexuality was against all she believed was right."

On the way home Jim's mother told him, "You'll learn not to do such foolish things." Los Angeles authorities had told his mother everything that had happened with the police and Dutch's trial. "She figured I'd gotten what I deserved."

"From that experience forward I learned to be wary of cops, but that didn't keep me from returning to California. That was the place for me."