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"JUST A MID-SUMMER DAY MEMORY!"

FRIDAY, SUMMER, 1958. Tony Perna swings the cut off broom stick and tips the half-ball. Pat Nicastro excitedly says, "Nice catch!" to Freddy Chiarlanza, as he runs across Indiana Ave. near the alley way behind Lena's candy store. Franky Pelligrini, Jimmy Cervone, and Jerry Bonino are playing "Chink" against the wall of my house, as Cathy and John Boschetti watch attentively. Ernie DiBenedetto and Harry Delp are playing wire ball. Albert Nanni, (who left his house about two hours ago to get a pound of sausage for his mother), is involved in a marathon awning ball match with Petchie. I am sitting on the step of the side door leading to the apartment over "Capriotti's Grocery Store". I am just about to take a bite of my prosciutto and provolone hoagie and I hear the dreaded words, "Thumbs up", come from Roger Serpico. I reluctantly hand him my hoagie and sigh, as he takes a huge bite. I quickly take my hoagie back and just as I am about to take a bite, I am interrupted by Moe Fratini shouting, "Ferdie did you have to hit it over the roof. That was the last half-ball. Me "Muscles" and "Dooner" were waiting to play the winners." Gracie Antonacci and Patti Bove are talking to Eileen Campolei in front of Dr. Madonna's office, as "Werewolf" walks pass them and into the alley way. He's probably going to get onto the roofs to retrieve some half-balls. Sandra Laurenzi, Catherine Coccia, and Angela Peditto are just behind him. I cover my sandwich and engage

in conversation with them. Sandra asks me, "What have you been doing since our graduation from St. Mary's?" "I just been hanging on the corner, but I hope to go down the shore soon." Catherine says, "Are you ready for high school?" "Yea, but I'm going to miss being at St. Mary's." Angela tells me that they are on their way to get measured for their Hallahan High uniforms, as she's waving to Petchie. Saying goodbye, my thoughts wander and I think about how lucky they are to be going to a school with a long standing tradition. Most of us boys from St. Mary's will be going to Cardinal Dougherty a high school that will graduate its first four year class in 1960. I return to eat my hoagie, but I am again distracted this time by the greeting of Mrs. Chiarlanza, (Freddy's Mom). "Good morning! That sandwich looks good. I hope there is no meat in it, because today is Friday." As she walks into Capriotti's, I immediately take all the prosciutto off of the roll and wrap it in the wax paper from around the hoagie. How could I forget that today is Friday. Sr. M. Germaine would be ashamed of me! Oh well, I'll eat what is left. Franky Nicastro calls me to help him hold onto one of the legs of Salvatore Davino who is hanging in the sewer head down. I dash over to help, and forget about my hoagie. While we are holding onto Sal who has retrieved at least six pimple balls and two sponge balls, I notice that Uncle Al is coming out of his store with both hands filled with clean

clothes. We finish pulling Sal out of the sewer and I immediately run across Indiana Ave. to open Uncle Al's 57 Chevy's car door for him. "Oh my gosh my hoagie!" Turning around to return to my hoagie I hear, "Hello! Mr. Rossi." It's another group of my former classmates. It is Alberta Spraga who called me. She is with Anita Saulino, Linda Arnone and Rosie Pittore. Forgetting about my hoagie I shoot the breeze with them and find out that they are also going to get measured for their uniforms. Suddenly remembering about my hoagie, I dart across the street. There I find "Rusty", Ernie DiBenedetto's dog, who is being pulled away by Ernie's sister Carol, but its too late he has devoured my hoagie. Even the dogs in our neighborhood are Italian and can't resist good provolone. He also managed to eat the prosciutto. I paid eighty five cents for that hoagie. I only have twenty five cents left and I'm still hungry. I guess I'll have to settle for a tuna fish sandwich at home. Just then Frank Grosso, his sister Angela, Sally Zorio and Billy Walters are coming into view as they cross 24th St. After greeting all of them, they mention that they are on their way to Trifiletti's on Fox St. to get a soft pretzel and an Italian water ice. I decide to join them. En route at the corner of Fox and Croskey we see Sr. M. Germaine and Sr. M. Marjorie who are glad to see all of us. My first thought is that I am glad that they didn't see me with the meat hoagie. HAVE A SAFE SUMMER!