It was the dead heat of the summer, and you could have cooked an egg on top of a car hood. With the air conditioner in need of repair, all the windows and doors of the small country church were wide open. An occassional breeze was the only relief from the heat.

My buddy Charlie and I were sitting in the back pew that Sunday morning, a few seats behind both our grandparents.

Charlie Sr. and my Paw Paw were talking about some wild dogs that were running through our neighborhood. Maw Maw and Mrs. Josie were talking about the meat sale at the Piggly Wiggly.

As we waited for services to begin, Charlie and I sat there, fanning ourselves with the church bulletin, complaining about how it was too hot to even come to church.

The choir slowly starting coming in, and the music caused everyone to come to attention. The piano man was itching to cut loose on the keys, but the congregation at the Lawrence County church wasn't ready for that yet. And every Methodist within 100 miles would have reminded him too.

After a few lines of I Surrender All and Take My Hand, the congregation took their seat.

It was right after someone requested prayers for Mr. Johnson, the town drunk, who had "the disease" when Charlie poked my arm.

He had taken the bulletin and made a paper airplane with it. He pointed his finger for me to move down the pew a bit, and he would glide it to me.

Hoping the preacher wouldn't see us, we threw the plane back and forth to each other. The congregation was completely unaware of the air raid going on behind them.

The preacher made a few grunts and cleared his throat a few times when he caught us. But we got cranked up again after he went back to his sermon.

And then Charlie gave his plane a little too much gas. It went flying past me to the next pew. It hit one of the church's older ladies in her face.

"Good heavens," she said, looking back to us.

I froze up, numb with fear. Charlie immediately grabbed his children's Bible. He must have started praying too.

Mrs. Josie and Maw Maw jerked around, glaring at us.

I don't know why I did it. Maybe it was the fear, but I pointed my finger at Charlie. Yes, I snitched on my buddy.

I knew the wrath of Maw Maw, and I wasn't completely over the switching I got on the way there.

Mrs. Josie calmly got up, smiling at the older lady who was just assaulted, whispering apologies

as the choir cranked up an unannounced Rock of Ages.
When she made her way to the back pew, her smile disappeared. She grabbed Charlie's arm and almost single-handly lifted him up out of the pew. As soon as they made it outside, I heard the familiar sound of a hand slapping bare legs.
Maw Maw didn't get up, but she gave me a look and snapped her fingers, pointing to the seat next to her. I rushed up and made my way to her, taking my seat.
I didn't move the rest of the service. Even when I went to grab a peppermint, Maw Maw slapped my hand.
When Mrs. Josie emerged with Charlie, his face was wet and his legs were red.
The preacher must have sensed the tension because he skipped children's time all together that Sunday.
I admit, I received a stern talk on the way home. I was told that I would never be allowed to sit alone again. Paper airplanes were outlawed in the church house. And I was to never "carry on with that Charlie boy" again.
Paw Paw sat in the front seat, packing his pipe. He never said a word.
We were made to sit in the car while Maw Maw picked up some hamburger meat from the big sale in town.
"I'm gonna have to teach you kids how to make better planes," Paw Paw said with a grin, once he was sure she was out of hearing range. "Mine would have at least made it to the pulpit."
With that being said, we both laughed ourselves silly...until Maw Maw made it back.