

## **Your Momma's Rules ...to keep other people from getting you and your association into antitrust trouble.**

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- 1. Who's Throwing the Party?** When you were 15, your momma wouldn't let you go to a party unless the right group sponsored it (like a church or school, or somebody's parents). You couldn't just say "Momma, a few couples are getting together in the woods." Same deal here; your momma was right. Don't go to any meetings unless there is a clear and proper sponsor and it is the right kind of officially recognized body that is properly constituted, broadly-based, and well-run. Otherwise, you may get in more trouble than you can handle.
- 2. 'What's Up?'** Your momma wanted to know "what kind of party is it?" She was right; there is a difference between drinking and skating, and she wanted to know what was going on. Same deal here. What is going on? If they don't send you a written agenda in advance, you really shouldn't go. (It is not an "agenda" if all it says is "(1) old business, (2) new business, (3) other," or anything like that.)
- 3. Chaperones.** When you were 15, your momma wouldn't let you go unless a chaperone was going. A lawyer is kind of like a chaperone; they tend to spot any developing troublemakers and throw them out of the party. If no lawyer is going to be there to chaperone, it is a sign the party might get too wild, and maybe you shouldn't go.
- 4. Stay Out of the Bushes.** Your momma knew that if you left the party, you were more likely to get in trouble. She was right. Don't go to "rump sessions" before, during or after meetings; the natural human temptation is to talk business there, and your business is best discussed openly in the proper forum. It is okay to have lunch with a friend or two, but don't let it turn into a "rump session" (hard to define, but we all know it when we see it; so see it before it is too late).
- 5. No Select Groups.** Remember how it hurt your feelings when some people got invited to the party but you didn't? Same deal here. If they don't invite the whole class, don't go. Especially don't go if they call it something stupid like "let's get the 'big three' together." That kind of talk will just get you in trouble; don't go.
- 6. Don't Get Taken in By Sweet Words.** Your momma told you they would talk sweet to you; don't get taken in. She was right. It would be simple if you could spot antitrust trouble just by seeing an evil-looking guy in a cloak and silk hat and a waxed mustache who whispered "Pst! Let's conspire!" They don't do that. People sometimes unknowingly fall into conspiracies, pulled in by other nice-seeming people who say "let's get on the same wavelength," or "let's sort it out before the meeting," or "let's get our story straight." If they whisper to you like that, they are the Devil. Don't be tempted. Don't go. It can only get you in trouble. Your "story" is open and honorable and firmly-based on correct data, and your story is already "straight". The only time you need to be on the "same wavelength" as anybody else is when you both tune in to the religious channel on your separate radios.
- 7. Don't Let Them Spike the Punch.** Your momma suspected that some boy might try to spike the punch, and she told the chaperone to keep a lookout. She was right; same deal here. Watch out that no narrow interest tries to rig the meeting or the system unfairly in favor of its company or its narrow

interest; like a spiked punch at a Junior high party, it can only lead to trouble. (Also, don't let anybody do the minutes on company stationery; it makes it look like their company was "in charge," which is probably unfair.)

**8. Appearances Count.** Your momma knew that if you slipped off to the woods from the party, people would assume the worst, even if you only held hands. She was right. Pay attention to how things might look to somebody else. Some people always assume the worst, and start a bunch of gossip. Don't be grist for the gossip. Make sure you behave and look like you are behaving. For instance, don't sit in the corner whispering with your competitors, even about football or movies. (At this point in your life, it won't be a gossip who will spread the scandal; it will be some lawyer trying to make you look bad to a jury, so he can personally make a lot of money. Strike a blow for liberty; behave and look like you behave and keep all the lawyers poor.)

**9. If the Party Turns Wild, Leave.** Your momma told you to leave if it got wild. She was right. If the other people at your meeting start talking about or doing bad stuff, get up and walk out. (It may be unpleasant then, but it beats going to jail or getting sued.)

**10. Call Your Momma if You're Not Sure.** Your momma gave you a dime (or a quarter or a nickel, depending on how old you are) to call her if you needed advice or help. She was right; same deal here. If you can't get your momma, call your lawyer.