“What are you two doing here?” I asked when Mom and Dad walked into the newspaper office.

“It’s not everyday you learn your children are being questioned by the police,” Mom answered, smiling. “We saw a young man delivering the newspapers and asked where you and Chloe were. He said he was covering your route because you were at the newspaper office since the cops needed to meet with you. We thought we should come check things out.”

“When Woody and I saw the article in the newspaper about someone stealing a bicycle in the South Forest neighborhood, we called the police and told them we took a picture of a guy on a bike,” Chloe explained. “The cops said they were coming to the newspaper office to talk to us, so Mr. Dawson had someone cover our route.” Chloe had barely finished explaining when Mr. Dawson entered the room with two police officers.

“I’m Officer O’Ryan and this is Officer Payne,” the taller man said, shaking our hands. “We appreciate you calling us. Approximately when did you take a picture of the person on the bike?” Chloe and I thought before answering.

“Monday morning around 8:30,” my sister replied.

“And you took the picture?” Officer O’Ryan asked Chloe.

“Yes sir,” Chloe answered.

“Chloe and I share a camera,” I said to the officer. “We combined our allowance and bought it at a yard sale. My sister takes the best pictures. We try to take the camera with us everywhere we go in case we need to snap a photo.”

“We have to confiscate your camera, pups. We’ll get it back to you as soon as possible, but we need it to do our investigation,” Officer O’Ryan informed. The cops were getting ready to leave when Officer Payne stopped and looked directly at Chloe and me.

“I want to commend the two of you,” Office Payne said. “First, I’m very impressed you read the newspaper. The newspaper is filled with facts and information about our world, state, and town. Lots of people depend on social media for news, but that news isn’t always accurate. The facts can be exaggerated, diminished, or altered altogether. However, news published in the paper was written by a reporter, who was trained to investigate the facts before publishing the story. It’s our responsibility as a productive citizen to read those factual stories so we can stay informed.

Secondly, great job on being aware of your surroundings. If you hadn’t noticed the squirrel, you wouldn’t have snapped the picture. Also, you were aware of the day and time. We tell people to get their heads up, be alert, and look around.

Finally, you should be applauded for calling the police department when you realized you possibly had information about a crime. So many folks don’t want to get involved. Others think that someone else will take care of it, but remember, ‘If you see something, say something.’ If you ever see something that doesn’t look quite right or witness activities that seem suspicious, report it using the 5 W’s.”

“The 5 W’s?” I asked, confused.

“Yes - It’s like what you use when writing a news story,” Officer Payne answered. “Stick to the facts and tell us who, what, when, where, and why. Who did you see? What did you see? When did you see it? Where did it occur? Why is it important? Remember, it’s better to be safe than sorry. Stay informed, stay alert, and speak up. Keep up the good work, pups!”

Chloe and I beamed with pride. Mom and Dad did too.

“Thanks,” Chloe and I replied. Mom, Dad, and the officers left while Chloe and I returned to work.

“Excellent job,” Mr. Dawson praised. “Follow me. I’ve got something for you.”