




Girl Ticketed for Selling Lemonade and Cookies

A 10-year-old girl in New York City made headlines over the weekend after receiving a \$50 ticket for selling lemonade and home-made cookies in the park. 

The entrepreneurial Clementine Lee and her father Richard set up shop in Riverside Park and had been in business for about 15 or 20 minutes before four park agents arrived demanding to see their permit.

"They approached us nonchalantly but then surrounded us," Clementine's dad told the *New York Post*. "They were very hostile as soon as they approached, saying 'Where's your permit? Where's your permit?'"

The dad admitted that the pair did not have one, so the officers proceeded to issue a citation — with a maximum fine of \$200 — for allegedly selling food without a license. "You've got to be kidding me, this is outrageous!" he told the hostile regulation enforcers. "Don't these agents have anything better to do? They could have at least told us to move but they didn't give us a chance.... There are better ways to raise money for the Parks Department then busting 10 year-olds."

A crowd of onlookers also stuck up for the duo, but to no avail — the "heartless pack of city sticklers iced their operation," as the *Post* put it in its humorous and pun-filled story entitled "Sweet Lemonade Kid Slapped — Bitter Agents Write \$50 Ticket." The daddy-daughter team managed to sell all 12 of their chocolate chip cookies and 10 glasses of lemonade at 50 cents each before the bust, but nowhere near enough to pay the fine.

"It was such a hot day I figured people would want a cold drink," the soccer enthusiast Clementine explained. "I was really nervous when these three agents cornered me and my dad.... I think they should let people sell lemonade out here. We weren't hurting anyone." She told the local CBS affiliate that "they made me feel really, really bad, and scared at the same time," noting that she did not know she was "breaking the law."

Fortunately sanity prevailed, if only because the story got out in the press. After the *Post* contacted the department, the park commissioner announced that the fine would be thrown out.

"The agent used extremely poor judgment," commissioner Adrian Benepe told the paper, saying he looked forward to buying lemonade from the girl if he passes by and that the officer responsible would be re-trained and reassigned. "We're going to make lemonade out of lemons."

Clementine said she might take him up on it, but that she was going to wait a little while first. After the ordeal, she moved the illegal operation to the lobby of her building, where presumably Big Brother has no say. And by the end of the day, she managed to earn \$19 for her savings.

But if it was not for the widespread exposure this story received — including stories on national news wires — the fine may have easily stuck and she could have had to cough up another \$31 to the park department.

Ayn Rand wrote, "When you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing ... you may know that your society is doomed." Hopefully we can get some real change at all levels of government before it really is too late.



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