

Never judge a book...

By Keith Nichols, April 2015 [[email](#)]

When I first decided to let my hair grow long way back in 1963, my mum and dad warned me that the police will never leave you alone, and how others would be hostile to me, poke fun, be unemployable, and how true my parents words became, and where one particular incident has haunted me to this day, involving the police, and what they did to me and 2 friends when we were just 18, but that is a long story that I've covered in 2 books that I've done, and covered the incident in some detail. My dad gave me some wise words back then, he told me that once I'd achieved something in life, I could walk round with a ring through my nose (thing now that millions do today)! I ignored Dad's warnings, and have paid the consequences many times in life for not wanting to be like everybody else. I have never in my life copied others, I've never smoked, taken drugs of any sort nor drunk alcohol, so I was a weird hippie, but not in the way folk expected, I had the most outrageous clothes, and loved the late 60s and early 70s.

This then leads on to one such incident. The late great **Mrs Rose Finesilver**, who ran the Contemporary Youth Club that once stood in Queens Road E17, asked me one day if I could do her an enormous favour. I didn't hesitate to help her as she was the one who stood up for me in the High Court, and totally believed in my innocence, but as I said earlier, this is another big story. Anyhow, Rose asked if I wouldn't mind meeting a man at Walthamstow Central Station. He had just done a long term prison sentence, for something quite serious - I didn't ask what - but went along to meet him. I recognised him by Roses description of him, scars and all; a big built chap who hardly ever smiled. Rose said that she wouldn't be home until a certain time, and she'd given me some money and told me to take him to a cafe and buy him a cuppa, so we walked from the station to a Greek or Turkish cafe on Hoe Street bridge. I went up to the counter and asked for two cups of tea, the owner said "No". So I told my guest that there was no tea, would he like coffee? He said yes, so I ordered 2 coffees, again the owner said a firmer "no". I asked what he meant, he then astounded me by saying that he wasn't going to serve me!

I of course asked why? and he said: "Because you have the long hair". I asked if he was joking, but then asked me to leave. I couldn't believe it when he said that my friend could stay, so there was my "friend" who had short hair, and had done heavens knows what to get a long prison sentence, and me without a blemish and very good character.

I was on another occasion asked to leave the Towers pub at the central because I wanted just lemonade and lime, the owner was most threatening towards me. The days of NO BLACKS, NO IRISH, NO LEATHER JACKETS, NO JEANS, NO LONG HAIR, etc... were still very far from over.

Another time I went into THE CHEQUERS pub in HIGH STREET. It was my one and only visit there whilst waiting for my pals, a lot of villains went to that pub, and as I again ordered a lemonade and lime, a bloke that stood next to me said "woman's drink", so I said does it make you hard or a man to drink something else then? No reply came back, he just walked away.

Keith Nichols