



A brush with the law

My old friend Harold had a mixed relationship with the law. Some of his young mates lived on the edge; one especially cherubic-looking youngster still in his teens, wheeling and dealing in stolen goods. The young guy was caught, and spent time in jail, but the aftermath continued to lay heavy on the shoulders of Harold, mainly because he was still holding some of the *hot* merchandise.



Harold was terrified that one particularly notorious policeman – a *Detective Inspector Grubber* - would come knocking at his door. This wake-up call duly arrived, in the form of the repeated pressing of his front doorbell (which gave out a pleasant rendition of Beethoven's *Fur Elise*). By then the goods had all been squirrelled away, with one TV – I'm ashamed to admit – residing for months in my own house.

At this point we should refer to one of Harold's best-known sayings: '*Three Weeks on Ice*,' which first saw light of day during this visit of the infamous D.I. Grubber. Peeping through the net curtains, Harold spotted Grubber and his sidekick D.C. Crapper, standing outside. Momentarily petrified, he busied himself by doing one last inspection of the house, finishing just as Beethoven started into his third jingle.

Grubber of course had a fair idea that Harold was a receiver, but he was an old school cop and recognized the infringement was not very serious, even if it could be proven. They were of the same vintage and the policeman just wanted to make Harold squirm a bit, so that he might be convinced to stay on the straight and narrow.

Faced with Grubber and Crapper together (their names were fact, not fiction), Harold tried to stand his ground and make light of the whole thing. Grubber was a short thick-set man, wearing a flat cap, while Crapper was tall and thin, in a cream-coloured trench coat. As they came through the door, Harold could not resist a line comparing them to the famous comedy duo, Peter Cooke and Dudley Moore:

“Hey, I should have laid out the red carpet; I didn’t know Pete and Dud were coming.”

This went down like a skydiver with a faulty ‘chute; simply adding to the tension.

“Harold, as you know, young Chris is now in Yatala,” said Grubber, spitting out the name Yatala (Adelaide’s main prison) with venom. *“And you may or may not know he has just done ‘three weeks on ice’. That’s solitary confinement in the cooler my friend.”*



“Yeah Harold, ‘three weeks on ice,’ echoed Crapper, keen to get his word in.

“And Harold,” went on Grubber, ignoring his assistant, *“If you’re too bloody clever with me old man, you’ll end up in Yatala too! And then I’ll make sure, personally, that you do three weeks in the slammer a couple of times over, if you get my drift.”*

“That’s a whole ‘six weeks on Ice’ Harold. You realise that?” chipped in Crapper.

A little while later they turned and left, Grubber doffing his cap with exaggerated theatrics, then Crapper slamming the door, which caused Beethoven to start up again.

“I need to fix that bloody doorbell” Harold muttered, wiping the sweat from his brow, his mutterings accompanied by a massive sigh of relief.

Duncan Gregory

www.whittlingourniche.com