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Opening Extract from...

Life

Written by Keith Richards

With James Fox

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Keith Richards

LIFE

with James Fox



Phoenix

Chapter One

In which I am pulled over by police officers in Arkansas during our 1975 US tour and a standoff ensues.

Why did we stop at the 4-Dice Restaurant in Fordyce, Arkansas, for lunch on Independence Day weekend? On any day? Despite everything I knew from ten years of driving through the Bible Belt. Tiny town of Fordyce. Rolling Stones on the police menu across the United States. Every copper wanted to bust us by any means available, to get promoted and patriotically rid America of these little fairy Englishmen. It was 1975, a time of brutality and confrontation. Open season on the Stones had been declared since our last tour, the tour of '72, known as the STP. The State Department had noted riots (true), civil disobedience (also true), illicit sex (whatever that is), and violence across the United States. All the fault of us, mere minstrels. We had been inciting youth to rebellion, we were corrupting America, and they had ruled never to let us travel in the United States again. It had become, in the time of Nixon, a serious political matter. He had personally deployed his dogs and dirty tricks against John Lennon, who he thought might cost him an

election. We, in turn, they told our lawyer officially, were the most dangerous rock-and-roll band in the world.

In previous days our great lawyer Bill Carter had single-handedly slipped us out of major confrontations devised and sprung by the police forces of Memphis and San Antonio. And now Fordyce, small town of 4,837 whose school emblem was some weird red bug, might be the one to take the prize. Carter had warned us not to drive through Arkansas at all, and certainly never to stray from the interstate. He pointed out that the state of Arkansas had recently tried to draw up legislation to outlaw rock and roll. (Love to see the wording of the statute – 'Where there be loudly and insistently four beats to the bar…') And here we were driving back roads in a brand-new yellow Chevrolet Impala. In the whole of the United States there was perhaps no sillier place to stop with a car loaded with drugs – a conservative, redneck southern community not happy to welcome different-looking strangers.

In the car with me were Ronnie Wood; Freddie Sessler, an incredible character, my friend and almost a father to me who will have many parts in this story; and Jim Callaghan, the head of our security for many years. We were driving the four hundred miles from Memphis to Dallas, where we had our next gig the following day at the Cotton Bowl. Jim Dickinson, the southern boy who played piano on 'Wild Horses,' had told us that the Texarkana landscape was worth the car ride. And we were planed out. We'd had a scary flight from Washington to Memphis, dropping suddenly many thousands of feet, with much sobbing and screaming, the photographer Annie Leibovitz hitting her head on the roof and the passengers kissing the tarmac when we landed. I was seen going to the back of the plane and consuming substances with more than usual dedication as we tossed about the skies, not wanting to waste. A bad one, in Bobby Sherman's old plane, the *Starship*.

So we drove and Ronnie and I had been particularly stupid. We pulled into this roadhouse called the 4-Dice where we sat down and ordered and then Ronnie and I went to the john. You know, just start me up. We got high. We didn't fancy the clientele out there, or the food, and so we hung in the john, laughing and carrying on. We sat there for forty minutes. And you don't do that down there. Not then. That's what excited and exacerbated the situation. And the staff called the cops. As we pulled out, there was a black car parked on the side, no number plate, and the minute we took off, twenty yards down the road, we get sirens and the little blinking light and there they are with shotguns in our faces.

I had a denim cap with all these pockets in it that were filled with dope. Everything was filled with dope. In the car doors themselves, all you had to do was pop the panels, and there were plastic bags full of coke and grass, peyote and mescaline. Oh my God, how are we going to get out of this? It was the worst time to get busted. It was a miracle we had been allowed into the States at all for this tour. Our visas hung on a thread of conditions, as every police force in the big cities also knew, and had been fixed by Bill Carter with very hard long-distance footwork with the State Department and the Immigration Service over the previous two years. It was obviously condition zero that we weren't arrested for possession of narcotics, and Carter was responsible for guaranteeing this.

I wasn't taking the heavy shit at the time; I'd cleaned up for the tour. And I could have just put all of that stuff on the plane. To this day I cannot understand why I bothered to carry all that crap around and take that chance. People had given me all this gear in Memphis and I was loath to give it away, but I still could have put it on the plane and driven clean. Why did I load the car like some pretend dealer? Maybe I woke up too late for the plane. I know I spent a long time opening up the

panels, stashing this shit. But peyote is not particularly my line of substances anyway.

In the cap's pockets there's hash, Tuinals, some coke. I greet the police with a flourish of the cap and throw pills and hash into the bushes. 'Hello, Officer' (flourish). 'Oh! Have I broken some local law? Pray forgive me. I'm English. Was I driving on the wrong side of the road?' And you've already got them on the back foot. And you've got rid of your crap. But only some of it. They saw a hunting knife lying on the seat and would later decide to take that as evidence of a 'concealed weapon,' the lying bastards. And then they made us follow them to a car park somewhere beneath city hall. As we drove they watched us, surely, throwing more of our shit into the road.

They didn't do a search immediately when we got to the garage. They said to Ronnie, 'OK, you go into the car and bring out your stuff.' Ronnie had a little handbag or something in the car, but at the same time, he tipped all the crap he had into a Kleenex box. And as he got out, he said to me, 'It's under the driver's seat.' And when I go in, I didn't have anything in the car to get, all I've got to do is pretend that I have something and take care of this box. But I didn't know what the fuck to do with it, so basically I just scrunched it up a bit and I put it under the backseat. And I walked out and said well I don't have anything. The fact that they didn't tear the car apart is beyond me.

By now they know who they've got ('Weeeell, looky here, we got some live ones'). But then they suddenly didn't seem to know what to do with these international stars stuck in their custody. Now they had to draft in forces from all over the state. Nor did they seem to know what to charge us with. They also knew we were trying to locate Bill Carter, and this must have intimidated them because this was Bill Carter's

front lawn. He had grown up in the nearby town of Rector and he knew every state law enforcement officer, every sheriff, every prosecuting attorney, all the political leaders. They may have started to regret that they'd tipped off the wire services to their catch. The national news media were gathering outside the courthouse – one Dallas TV station had hired a Learjet to get pole position on the story. It was Saturday afternoon and they were making calls to Little Rock to get advice from state officials. So instead of locking us up and having that image broadcast to the world, they kept us in loose 'protective custody' in the police chief's office, which meant we could walk about a bit. Where was Carter? Offices shut during the holiday, no cell phones then. It was taking some time to locate him.

In the meantime we're trying to get rid of all this stuff. We're festooned. In the '70s I was flying high as a kite on pure, pure Merck cocaine, the fluffy pharmaceutical blow. Freddie Sessler and I went to the john, we weren't even escorted down there. 'Jesuschrist,' the phrase that preceded everything with Freddie, 'I'm loaded.' He's got bottles full of Tuinal. And he's so nervous about flushing them down that he loses the bottle and all the fucking turquoise-and-red pills are rolling everywhere and meanwhile he's trying to flush down coke. I popped the hash down and the weed, flushed it, the fucking thing won't flush, there's too much weed, I'm flushing and flushing and then suddenly these pills come rolling there under the cubicle. And I'm trying to pick 'em up and fling 'em in and everything, but I can't because there's another cubicle in between the one Freddie's in and the one I'm in, so there's fifty pills lying stranded on the floor in the middle cubicle. 'Jesuschrist, Keith.' 'Keep your cool, Freddie, I've got all the ones out of mine, have you got all the ones out of yours?' 'I think so, I think so.' 'OK, let's go in the middle one and get

rid of them.' It was just raining with fucking shit. It was unbelievable, every pocket or place you looked…I never knew I had that much coke in my life!

The sleeper was Freddie's briefcase, which was in the trunk of the car, as yet unopened and we knew he had cocaine in there. They couldn't fail to find it. Freddie and I decided we should disown Freddie strategically for that afternoon and say he was a hitchhiker, but one to whom we were happy to extend the powers of our legal adviser, if need be, when he finally appeared on the scene.

Where was Carter? It took some time to marshal our forces, while the population of Fordyce was swelling to riot-size proportions. People from Mississippi, Texas, Tennessee – all coming in to watch the fun. Nothing would happen until Carter was located, and he was on the tour, he wasn't far away, just having a deserved day off. So there was time to reflect how I had dropped my guard and forgotten the rules. Don't break the law and get pulled over. Cops everywhere, and certainly in the South, have a whole range of quasi-legal tricks to bust you if they feel like it. And they could put you away for ninety days then, no problem. That's why Carter told us to stick to the interstate. The Bible Belt was a lot tighter in those days.

We did many miles on the ground in those early tours. Roadhouses were always an interesting gamble. And you better get ready for it – and be ready for it. You try going to a truck stop in 1964 or '65 or '66 down south or in Texas. It felt much more dangerous than anything in the city. You'd walk in and there's the good ol' boys and slowly you realize that you're not going to have a very comfortable meal in there, with these truckers with crew cuts and tattoos. You nervously peck away – 'Oh, I'll have that to go, please.' They'd call us girls because of the long hair. 'How you doing, girls? Dance

with me?' Hair…the little things that you wouldn't think about that changed whole cultures. The way they reacted to our looks in certain parts of London then was not much different from the way they reacted to us in the South. 'Hello, darling,' and all that shit.

When you look back it was relentless confrontation, but you're not thinking about it at the time. First off these were all new experiences and you were really not aware of the effects it might or might not have on you. You were gradually growing into it. I just found in those situations that if they saw the guitars and knew you were musicians, then suddenly it was totally OK. Better take a guitar into a truck stop. 'Can you pick that thing, son?' Sometimes we'd actually do it, pull out the guitars, sing for our supper.

But then all you had to do was cross the tracks and you'd get a real education. If we were playing with black musicians, they'd look after us. It was 'Hey, you wanna get laid tonight? She'll love you. She ain't seen anything like you before.' You got welcomed, you got fed and you got laid. The white side of town was dead, but it was rockin' across the tracks. Long as you knew cats, you was cool. An incredible education.

Sometimes we'd do two or three shows a day. They wouldn't be long shows; you'd be doing twenty minutes, half an hour three times a day, waiting for the rotation because these were mostly revue shows, black acts, amateurs, local white hits, whatever, and if you went down south, it was just endless. Towns and states just went by. It's called white-line fever. If you're awake you stare at the white lines down the middle of the road, and every now and again somebody says 'I need a crap' or 'I'm hungry.' Then you walked into these brief bits of theater behind the road. These are minor roads in the Carolinas, Mississippi and stuff. You get out dying for a leak, you see 'Men's' and some black bloke is standing there

saying 'Coloreds only,' and you think 'I'm being discriminated against!' You'd drive by these little juke joints and there's this incredible music pumping out, and steam coming out the window.

'Hey, let's pull over here.'

'Could be dangerous.'

'No, come on, listen to that shit!'

And there'd be a band, a trio playing, big black fuckers and some bitches dancing around with dollar bills in their thongs. And then you'd walk in and for a moment there's almost a chill, because you're the first white people they've seen in there, and they know that the energy's too great for a few white blokes to really make that much difference. Especially as we don't look like locals. And they get very intrigued and we get really into being there. But then we got to get back on the road. Oh shit, I could've stayed here for days. You've got to pull out again, lovely black ladies squeezing you between their huge tits. You walk out and there's sweat all over you and perfume, and we all get in the car, smelling good, and the music drifts off in the background. I think some of us had died and gone to heaven, because a year before we were plugging London clubs, and we're doing all right, but actually in the next year, we're somewhere we thought we'd never be. We were in Mississippi. We'd been playing this music, and it had all been very respectful, but then we were actually there sniffing it. You want to be a blues player, the next minute you fucking well are and you're stuck right amongst them, and there's Muddy Waters standing next to you. It happens so fast that you really can't register all of the impressions that are coming at you. It comes later on, the flashbacks, because it's all so much. It's one thing to play a Muddy Waters song. It's another thing to play with him.

Bill Carter was finally tracked down to Little Rock,

where he was having a barbecue at the house of a friend of his who happened to be a judge, a very useful coincidence. He would hire a plane and be there in a couple of hours, bringing the judge with him. Carter's judge friend knew the state policeman who was going to search the car; told him that he thought the police had no right to do it and warned him to hold off a search until he got there. Everything froze for two more hours.

Bill Carter had grown up working on the local political campaigns from when he was in college, so he knew almost everybody of importance in the state. And people he had worked for in Arkansas had now become some of the most powerful Democrats in Washington. His mentor was Wilbur Mills, from Kensett, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, second most powerful man after the president. Carter came from a poor background, joined the Air Force at the time of Korea, paid for law studies with his GI money until it ran out, when he joined the Secret Service and ended up guarding Kennedy. He wasn't in Dallas that day – he was on a training course – but he'd been everywhere with Kennedy, planned his trips, and knew all the key officials in every state Kennedy had visited. He was close to the center. After Kennedy's death he was an investigator on the Warren Commission and then started his own law practice in Little Rock, becoming a kind of people's lawyer. He had a lot of balls. He was passionate about the rule of law, the correct way of doing things, the Constitution – and he taught police seminars on it. He'd gone into the defense attorney business he told me because he'd got fed up with policemen routinely abusing their power and bending the law, which meant almost all of them he encountered on tour with the Rolling Stones, in almost every city. Carter was our natural ally.

His old contacts in Washington had been his ace card

when we were refused visas to tour in the United States in 1973. What Carter found when he first went to Washington on our behalf late that year was that the Nixon dictum prevailed and ran through the bureaucracy down to the lowest level. He was told officially that the Stones would never tour in the United States again. Apart from our being the most dangerous rock-and-roll band in the world, inciting riots, purveying gross misconduct and contempt for the law, there was widespread anger that Mick had appeared on stage dressed as Uncle Sam, wearing the Stars and Stripes. That by itself was enough to refuse him entry. It was bunting! You had to guard yourself against being attacked from that area. Brian Jones got pulled in because he picked up an American flag that was lying around backstage in the mid-'60s in Syracuse, New York, I think it was. He put it over his shoulder, but a corner of it touched the ground. This was after the show and we were making our way back and the police escort barged us all into an office and started screaming, 'Dragging the flag on the ground. You're demeaning my nation, an act of sedition.'

Then there was my record – no getting away from it. It was also widely known – what else did the press write about me? – that I had a heroin addiction. I'd just had a conviction in the UK for possession of drugs, in October 1973, and I had been convicted of possession in France in 1972. Watergate was heating up when Carter began his campaign – some of Nixon's henchmen had been jailed and Nixon was soon to fall along with Haldeman, Mitchell and the rest – some of whom had been involved personally with the FBI in the underhanded campaign against John Lennon.

Carter's advantage at the immigration department was that he was one of the boys, he came from law enforcement, he had respect for having been with Kennedy. He did an 'I know how you boys feel' and just said he wanted a hearing because

he didn't think we were being treated fairly. He worked his way in; many months of slogging. He paid attention particularly to the lower-level staff, who he knew could obstruct things on technicalities. I underwent medical tests to prove that I was drug free, from the same doctor in Paris who had given me many a clean bill of health. Then Nixon resigned. And then Carter asked the top official to meet Mick and judge for himself, and of course Mick puts on his suit and charms the pants off him. Mick is really the most versatile bloke. Why I love him. He can hold a philosophical discussion with Sartre in his native tongue. Mick's very good with the locals. Carter told me he applied for the visas not in New York or Washington but in Memphis, where it was quieter. The result was an astonishing turnaround. Waivers and visas were suddenly issued on one condition: that Bill Carter toured with the Stones and would personally assure the government that riots would be prevented and that there would be no illegal activities on the tour. (They required a doctor to accompany us – an almost fictional character who appears later in the narrative, who became a tour victim, sampling the medication and running off with a groupie.)

Carter had reassured them by offering to run the tour Secret Service-style, alongside the police. His other contacts also meant that he would get a tip-off if the police were planning a bust. And that's what saved our asses on many occasions.

Things had hardened up since the 1972 tour, with all the demonstrations and antiwar marches and the Nixon period. The first evidence of this was in San Antonio on June 3. This was the tour of the giant inflatable cock. It came rising up from the stage as Mick sang 'Starfucker.' It was great was the cock, though we paid for it later in Mick's wanting props at every tour after that, to cover his insecurities. There was

a huge business of getting elephants on stage in Memphis until they ended up crashing through ramps and shitting all over the stage in rehearsals and were abandoned. We never had a problem with the cock in our opening shows at Baton Rouge. But the cock was a lure to the coppers who had given up trying to bust us in the hotel or while we were traveling or in the dressing room. The only place they could get us was on stage. They threatened to arrest Mick if the cock rose that night, and there was a mighty standoff. Carter warned them that the kids would burn down the arena. He'd taken the temperature and realized the kids weren't going to stand for it. In the end Mick decided to defer to the sentiments of the authorities, and it didn't erect itself in San Antonio. In Memphis when they threatened to arrest Mick for singing the lyrics 'Starfucker, starfucker,' Carter stopped them in their tracks by producing a playlist from the local radio station that showed they'd been playing it on the air without any protest for two years. What Carter saw and was determined to fight every inch of the way was that every time the police moved, in every city, they violated the law, acted illegally, tried to bust in without warrants, made searches without probable cause.

So there was some form on the books already by the time Carter finally got to Fordyce, with the judge under his arm. A great press corps was established in town; roadblocks had been erected to stop more people coming in. What the police wanted to do was to open the trunk, where they were sure they would find drugs. First they charged me with reckless driving because my tires had squealed and kicked up gravel as I left the restaurant car park. Twenty yards of reckless driving. Charge two: I had a 'concealed weapon,' the hunting knife. But to open the trunk legally they needed to show 'probable cause,' meaning there had to be some evidence or reasonable

suspicion that a crime had been committed. Otherwise the search is illegal and even if they find the stuff the case will be thrown out. They could have opened the trunk if they'd seen contraband when they looked through the car window, but they hadn't seen anything. This 'probable cause' business was what generated the shouting matches that frequently erupted now between the various officials as the afternoon wore on. First off, Carter made it clear that he saw a trumped-up charge. To invent a probable cause, the cop who stopped me said that he smelled marijuana smoke coming through the windows as we left the car park and this was their cue to open the trunk. 'They must think I fell off a watermelon truck,' Carter told us. The cops were trying to say that in the minute between leaving the restaurant and driving out of the car park there was time to light up a spliff and fill the car with enough smoke that it could be smelled many yards away. This was why they had arrested us, they said. That alone destroyed the credibility of the police evidence. Carter discussed all this with an already enraged chief of police, whose town was under siege, but who knew he could stop our sold-out concert the following night at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas by keeping us in Fordyce. In Chief Bill Gober, Carter saw and we saw the archetype redneck cop, the Bible Belt version of my friends from Chelsea police station, always prepared to bend the law and abuse their powers. Gober was a man personally enraged by the Rolling Stones – their dress, their hair, what they stood for, their music and above all their challenge to authority, as he saw it. Disobedience. Even Elvis said 'Yes, sir.' Not these long-haired punks. So Gober went ahead and opened the trunk, warned by Carter that he would challenge him all the way to the Supreme Court. And when the trunk was opened that was the real creamer. It was legs-in-the-air laughter.

When you crossed the river from Tennessee, then mostly a dry state, into West Memphis, which is in Arkansas, there were liquor stores selling what was basically moonshine with brown paper labels. Ronnie and I had gone berserk in one of them, buying every bizarre bottle of bourbon with a great label, Flying Cock, Fighting Cock, the Grey Major, little hip flasks with all of these exotic handwritten labels on them. We had sixty-odd in the trunk. So now we were suddenly suspected of being bootleggers. 'No, we bought them, we paid for them.' So I think all of that booze confused them. This is the '70s and boozers are not dopeheads, in those days there was that separation. 'At least they're men and drink whiskey.' Then they found Freddie's briefcase, which was locked, and he told them he'd forgotten the combination. So they smacked it open and there, sure enough, were two small containers of pharmaceutical cocaine. Gober thought he had us, or at least he had Freddie, cold.

It took some time to find the judge, now late in the evening, and when he arrived he'd been out on the golf course all day, drinking, and by this time he was flying.

Now we have total comedy, absurdity, Keystone Kops as the judge takes to his bench and the various lawyers and cops try to get him to follow their versions of the law. What Gober wanted to do was to get the judge to rule that the search and the finding of the coke were legal and that all of us would be detained on felony charges – i.e., put in the slammer. On this little point of law, arguably, hung the future of the Rolling Stones, in America at least.

What then happened is pretty much as follows, from what I overheard and from Bill Carter's later testimony. And this is the quickest way to tell it, with apologies to Perry Mason.

The Cast:

Bill Gober. Police Chief. Vindictive, enraged.

Judge Wynne. Presiding judge in Fordyce. Very drunk.

Frank Wynne. Prosecuting attorney. The judge's brother.

Bill Carter. Well-known, aggressive criminal lawyer, representing the Rolling Stones. Native of Arkansas, from Little Rock.

Tommy Mays. Prosecuting attorney. Idealistic, fresh out of law school.

Others present: Judge Fairley. Brought along by Carter to witness fair play and to keep him out of jail.

Outside Courthouse: Two thousand Rolling Stones fans who are pressed against barricades outside the town hall, chanting 'Free Keith. Free Keith.'

Inside Courtroom:

Judge: Now, I think what we are judging here is a felony. A felony, gennnmen. I will take summmissions. Mr. Attorney?

Young Prosecuting Attorney: Your Honor, there is a problem here about evidence.

Judge: Y'all have to excuse me a minute. I'll recess.

[Perplexity in court. Proceeding held up for ten minutes. Judge returns. His mission was to cross the road and buy a pint bottle of bourbon before the store closed at ten p.m. The bottle is now in his sock.]

Carter [on telephone to Frank Wynne, the judge's brother]: Frank, where are you? You'd better come up. Tom's intoxicated. Yeah. OK. OK.

Judge: Proceed, Mr. . . . ah . . . proceed.

Young Prosecuting Attorney: I don't think we can legally do this, Your Honor. We don't have justification to hold

them. I think we have to let them go.

Police Chief [to judge, yelling]: Damn we do. You gonna let these bastards go? You know I'm gonna place you under arrest, Judge. You damn right I am. You are intoxicated. You are publicly drunk. You are not fit to sit on that bench. You are causing a disgrace to our community. [He tries to grab him.]

Judge [yelling]: You sonofabitch. Gerraway from me. You threaten me, I'm gonna have your ass outta . . . [A scuffle.]

Carter [moving to separate them]: Whoa. Now, boys, boys. Let's stop *squabbling.* Let's keep *talking.* This is no time to get the liver out and put the knives in ha ha . . . We got TV, the world's press outside. Won't look good. You know what the governor's going to say about this. Let's proceed with the business. I think we can reach some agreement here.

Courtroom Official: Excuse me, Judge. We have the BBC on live news from London. They want you now.

Judge: Oh yeah. 'Scuse me a minute, boys. Be right back. [He takes a nip from the bottle in his sock.]

Police Chief [still yelling]: Goddamn circus. Damn you, Carter, these boys have committed a felony. We found cocaine in that damn car. What more do you want? I'm gonna bust their asses. They gonna play by our rules down here and I'm gonna hit 'em where it hurts. How much they payin' you, Hoover boy? Unless I get a ruling that the search was legal, I'm gonna arrest the judge for public drunk.

Judge [v/o to BBC]: Oh yeah, I was over there in England in World War Two. Bomber pilot, 385th Bomb Group. Station Great Ashfield. I had a helluva time over there. . . . Oh, I love England. Played golf. Some of the great courses I played on. You got some great ones there. . . . Wennnworth? Yeah. Now to inform y'all, we're gonna hold a press conference with the boys and explain some of the

proceedings here, how the Rolling Stones came to be in our town here an' all.

Police Chief: I got 'em here and I'm holding 'em. I want these limeys, these little fairies. Who do they think they are?

Carter: You want to start a riot? You seen outside? You wave one pair of handcuffs and you will lose control of this crowd. This is the Rolling Stones, for Christ sakes.

Police Chief: And your little boys will go behind bars.

Judge [returned from interview]: What's that?

Judge's Brother [taking him aside]: Tom, we need to confer. There is no legal cause to hold them. We will have all hell to pay if we don't follow the law here.

Judge: I know it. Sure thing. Yes. Yes. Mr. Carrrer. You will all approach the bench.

The fire had gone out of all except Chief Gober. The search had revealed nothing that they could legally use. There was nothing to charge us with. The cocaine belonged to Freddie the hitchhiker and it had been illegally discovered. The state police were mostly now on Carter's side. With much conferring and words in the ear, Carter and the other lawyers made a deal with the judge. Very simple. The judge would like to keep the hunting knife and drop the charge on that – it hangs in the courtroom to this day. He would reduce the reckless driving to a misdemeanor, nothing more than a parking ticket for which I would pay $162.50. With the $50,000 in cash that Carter had brought down with him, he paid a bond of $5,000 for Freddie and the cocaine, and it was agreed that Carter would file to have it dismissed on legal grounds later – so Freddie was free to go too. But there was one last condition. We had to give a press conference before we went and be photographed with our arms around the judge. Ronnie and I conducted our press conference from the bench. I was wearing

a fireman's hat by this time and I was filmed pounding the gavel and announcing to the press, 'Case closed.' Phew!

It was a classic outcome for the Stones. The choice always was a tricky one for the authorities who arrested us. Do you want to lock them up, or have your photograph taken with them and give them a motorcade to see them on their way? There's votes either way. In Fordyce, by the skin of our teeth, we got the motorcade. The state police had to escort us through the crowds to the airport at around two in the morning, where our plane, well stocked with Jack Daniel's, was revved up and waiting.

In 2006, the political ambitions of Governor Huckabee of Arkansas, who was going to stand in the primaries as a contender for the Republican presidential nomination, extended to granting me a pardon for my misdemeanor of thirty years previous. Governor Huckabee also thinks of himself as a guitar player. I think he even has a band. In fact there was nothing to pardon. There was no crime on the slate in Fordyce, but that didn't matter, I got pardoned anyway. But what the hell happened to that car? We left it in this garage loaded with dope. I'd like to know what happened to that stuff. Maybe they never took the panels off. Maybe someone's still driving it around, still filled with shit.