

and down the hallways to and from the courtrooms on the four main floors. Controlled chaos best described this completely urban scene.

But it was my courtroom, and my courtroom for twenty-one months. In addition to experiencing the high of exercising judicial power, I began the process of learning on the fly what many rules of evidence really meant—starting with the hearsay rule. Most trial lawyers would expect no less from a trial judge. Keeping them from learning that my “pre-judicial” knowledge of evidence wouldn’t fill many thimbles was important to me.

Over the next dozen years or so, I filled fifteen to twenty yellow tablets with notes on evidence. While it may not qualify for *Ripley’s Believe It or Not*, it reached the point where I talked about writing a loose-leaf book on evidence. Judge Larry Bohning frequently asked me whether I had started writing it as yet. Not as yet.

It wasn’t surprising to hear rumors about traffic tickets getting “fixed.” Committing hanky-panky seems to be part of who we are and is made easier when several hundred thousand such tickets are issued each year. I was surprised when it was visited on me by two visitors to my chambers within two weeks of assuming the bench.

The first visitor was a district captain of the Denver Democratic Party. Smiling at all times, she essentially told me that since I owed my good fortune to Mayor McNichols, I shouldn’t have a problem taking care of the traffic ticket in her hand. Then I received a similar visit by a future state and federal judge, except that he stressed his own self-importance rather than mentioning the mayor.

Each of them walked out in a huff after I told them that I wouldn’t “take care” of even a parking ticket for my mother. Because of the brazenness of it all, I made a beeline to a veteran judge, Paul Weadick, who also was handling traffic tickets at the

time. He more or less told me not to touch anything like that with a ten-foot pole. Enough said.

Then there was the renowned police officer, Buster Snider, who was assigned to my courtroom for my full term in traffic court. He wrote more traffic tickets than any other Denver officer, by a substantial margin. He was particularly fond of writing tickets for loud muffler violations, I surmised, because loud mufflers and the like were the antithesis of an orderly and civilized society.

Early on, I rode in a police car with Buster and his partner for the entirety of one of the evening shifts, ostensibly to gain more insight into police work. (This practice was not uncommon for judges at that time.) Buster drove the car, with his partner seemingly just tagging along.

He wrote more than thirty traffic tickets in the downtown area that night. About halfway through this “ticketing the smart alecks” and revenue-raising effort, we took a break to get some food to eat in the car. His partner became exceedingly agitated when Buster drove off to find more offenders about the time the first bites of our sandwiches were halfway to our mouths.

One of Buster’s approaches to police work on the street was to snuff the life out of minor skirmishes (some of which many officers would ignore) in order to avoid the possibility of their growing into major skirmishes. Based on my observations, he carried out his work with what would pass as a patriotic and fundamentalist fervor. His public relations took hits, in part, because some of his mannerisms reminded people of George C. Scott in *Patton*.

Some of Buster’s many detractors considered him dangerously close to being an evildoer for some of his conduct. An example was ticketing persons for jaywalking for crossing Broadway Avenue after coming out of a gay bar at closing time (2:00 A.M.). But many in the downtown business community did not want