

Caught Jaywalking in Adelaide!

Shôn Ellerton, September 10, 2020

It was inevitable. The day I was finally caught jaywalking!



Only a few days ago, I made a comment to someone that the police are often stretched; however, I think I jinxed myself because this morning I got cautioned and, not long afterwards, received an expiation note in my inbox for jaywalking in Adelaide. I gotta hand it to those guys in blue today, it must have been a tough job sitting there preying on dastardly wrongdoers taking the plunge to cross a road without the little green man telling you that it's safe to do so.

Now let me a bit more specific here. The 'incident' occurred on a little street called Hindley Street at a location where the train passengers emerge from the tunnels from Adelaide Central train station.



It was earlyish, around 7am, and *no* moving vehicular traffic at all when I got there. I was wearing large noise-cancelling headphones and wearing a woolly hat on top, giving me a rather comical look like someone with an oversized

head. I didn't shave this morning either, so I probably looked like someone who *needed* to be shamed, if you believe in karma and all that stuff!

In all honesty, I had completely forgotten that jaywalking is a crime in Australia and having lived more than fifteen years in the UK where jaywalking is not illegal, I didn't really think much of it. It's not as if I was playing *Frogger*—a video game from 1981--running across a busy road dodging the traffic hoping not to be squashed by tons of fast-moving metal. This road was totally quiet at the time and only two lanes wide and having to first press the button for the little green man to come out and then wait there looking like a complete dope seemed ingenuously silly at the time. So being 99.9999999% confident that no one in a super-fast sports car would come hurtling down to mow me down, I took a reasonable gamble to cross the road despite the red man telling me not to do so.

However, little did I realise that a couple of beady-eyed cops sitting amongst some pleasant looking leafy trees opposite the road were eyeing me over whilst I was making my foolhardy deed. Just when I got to the other side, to my surprise, I was approached by one of them. He came to the point quickly that I had illegally crossed the road and he was then going to caution me. He took out his little black notebook—how they love their little black notebooks—and asked for my particulars. There are some who would take the risk of giving out fake particulars, but this is usually an awfully bad idea. In any case, I usually make out to be a terribly unconvincing liar!

Just to side-track a little, I remembered a funny clip during a BBC documentary about train fare evasion sometime back in the 90s. In the documentary, there was a scene at Kings Cross Station where a member of the British Transport Police caught this weaselly-looking guy in his fifties or so without a ticket. He kind of looked and talked like Monty Python's Eric Idle and, frankly, he was being a smart-arse. The police asked questions taking down particulars.

'What's your name, sir?' asked the policeman.

'Arthur' the fare evader answers back.

'And your surname please?' adds the policeman.

'King'

'Address please, sir?' continues the policeman.

'16 Camelot Drive, Glastonbury'

Just before the policeman resumed with jotting down additional notes, he takes a brief pause and realises to his embarrassment that he has just been taken for a ride.

'Sir, let me understand. You are Arthur King of Camelot Drive? As in King Arthur? Who also happened to live in Camelot? Do I look like a fool to you?'

King Arthur, the fare evader, gave a quick surly smirk back at the policeman having had a little amusement out of the charade he was playing. Clearly, the policeman did not share the same sentiments.

'Shall we begin again, sir?', the policeman said tiredly.

Back to my story in Adelaide, after the policeman took my particulars down, he cautioned me without a fine and told me that crossing the road while the red man was visible is very dangerous and that he did not want to scoop the remains of a dead person off the road. Seriously. He really said this! I was trying not to laugh for fear of the policeman changing his mind to convert the caution to an unwelcome fine.

After this, I continued my way to work but curiosity got the better of me and I searched the jaywalking rules for South Australia. Apparently, if I had crossed the road 20 metres either side of the pedestrian crossing, I would have got away with it unless I was walking diagonally across the road or in such a manner that I would have been a hindrance to traffic at the time, both of which are illegal under South Australian laws and regulations.

Therefore, in future, I have three options at my disposal before I cross the exceedingly dangerous streets of downtown Adelaide.

1. Be the model citizen and push the big silver button to wait for the little green man regardless if there is any traffic or not.
2. Purposely skirt 20 metres either side of the pedestrian crossing and then cross the road, which, in all honesty is a more dangerous option, but that's ok. It's legal.
3. Act like you have got a mental issue by shouting obscenities at everything within earshot. The police tend to ignore them.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is my little bit of excitement for the day!