



Little Richard

It's not the size of the man in the fight...

I lived about two miles from my high school, and there was a soda shop about half-way between my neighborhood and school where all of the “cool” kids stopped to sugar-up after school. There were two pin-ball machines in the back of the shop where we gathered, much like the scenes in Happy Days. There was a hanger-on kid named Richard who was considerably shorter and slimmer than most boys his age, and was also a nerd, which in those days meant he got good grades. Naturally, he was the target of constant bullying, insults and poking as only teens, particularly teen boys are capable of providing. On one memorable day, the theme was “Richard’s not cool and should not be allowed to hang with the cool guys”. The comments grew especially nasty that day and Richard, red-faced and near tears, said, “I’ll show you guys what cool really is!” and stormed out the door.

About a half hour later, a police car pulled up the curb in front of the store, lights flashing and sirens wailing. The driver’s side door opened and out stepped Little Richard, cool as a cucumber, walked into the store sat down at the counter and ordered a cheeseburger. The rest of us “cool” guys scattered like leaves in the autumn wind. It turned out that Richard lived near a police sub-station and had noticed that officers frequently left their cruisers running when they went into the station to use the bathroom, take a break or just flirt with the female clerks. We never picked on Richard again.



EPILOG

Richard didn't get into any trouble because of his stunt, I know that. At some point he decided that he needed to learn to play the piano in order to achieve social acceptance. He tore into it with a passion, focusing on boogie-woogie and Honky-tonk styles. I believe he went to Muhlenberg College and I expect was the life of the party there. He later went law school, then disappeared into the Washington DC deep state.

Haven't heard anything of him for many years.

Gene Ziegler, Chandler Arizona October 2018