

BLIND DATE

I had spent only twelve days in my new place of residence in Portland, Oregon, before the information I had gotten upon leaving New York had me back on the highways, Eastbound to Toronto this time to accomplish three goals: To see The Rolling Stones in a small venue, to be at the courthouse for Keith's hearing to get pictures and to follow the New Barbarians tour of the U.S. After spending four and a half days on the road between Portland and Oshawa, Ontario I was only somewhat successful with regard to my first goal. All I managed to catch was the last two songs of the last show that night at the Civic Auditorium. Let's just say that I enjoyed the hell out of it, but the enjoyment was brief.

After the show I found myself in quite an intense scene outside the venue. I was mobbed while selling prints and nearly all I had with me disappeared in a matter of minutes, a few without any payment being rendered by the running figure who used the "just grab it technique". I left the vicinity of the Civic Auditorium with the very last people to leave the place and rode with them to the general area of Yonge Street in uptown Toronto. Here, I found shops still open and located a place to buy some film for the little Instamatic I had with me. Next on my list was some food and while having breakfast I thought about the strange dream I'd had before leaving from Portland. In the dream I had gotten to Toronto, met the trucks with the Stones equipment, then moved and set up Charlie's drums. Then while hanging out I heard Ron Wood goofing, saying "Yeah you're in but you'll still have to hide in the backstage area". That's not what happened, but the next morning something a great deal more interesting did.

I left the restaurant at about three a.m. and walked down to the courthouse. Hung out there by myself until about seven-thirty when another fellow showed up. He had the same thing in mind as I did: Getting photographs of Keith Richards at the hearing. For the next hour or so we talked about our experiences as photographers and how we would go about the task at hand. It was almost eight-thirty when an elderly lady approached us with a blind girl on her arm. She said to me "You look like you know where this girl needs to go". I was now in the company of someone else who was intent on being at this hearing. Said her name was Rita. I told the lady that I would look after Rita and she left.

By nine a.m. the crowd had grown substantially and now included all kinds of press and TV people who insisted that they "knew what time and where Keith would show his face" and "they were certain to get some footage" and that "you and your companions certainly would not". Despite their insistence they were not even allowed entry into the building never mind the closed hearing itself. So they were stuck outside with the rest of us; which amounted to a very large, aggravated crowd by ten o'clock. Shortly after ten I decided to let the blind girl watch my bags while I took a stroll around. As soon as I was ten or twelve feet away from Rita, I saw IT.

IT was not much more than a movement of black within black, a glint of light as if on a shiny button and I was bolting down the little horseshoe shaped ramp into the basement (there was an underground tunnel/entrance leading to a below street level parking garage). There, amidst shouts of "Hey you can't be in here, you can't do that"