

About me

In the understanding that nobody donates to a dodgy campaigner, here I come clean about my previous. Filth about me may soon be valued at a premium.

Yes – I’m an ex-catholic. Born in ’57, the seventh of eight children, I grew up in Aberdeen on a middle-class eccentric city farm. Educated at the rough St Peters RC School, the even rougher Holy Family Primary School and thence to the really much posher Aberdeen Grammar School. I was an altar boy, an activity I undertook in order to stay awake at church. I failed in that regard and on one occasion inadvertently set myself ablaze in the 10pm Holy Saturday service, through swaying sleepily into the path of the altar candle, an event which roused the congregation from their slumber too. My rebellious criteria became established in 1974 when I grew the longest hair in the school (to my waist) and was almost expelled for refusing to wear the uniform.



I left at the end of 5th year, worked as a milkman and then at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary as a porter cum dogsbody, before escaping to Bristol Uni where I enjoyed a hedonistic three years studying Biochemistry and Drama.

My best friends were the Jews I met – they shared my catholic guilt and appreciation of the weirdness about religion. Also knew how to party. They helped me make it as Bristol’s Rag Week Drag Queen at the end of my first year and things just went downhill from there.

Somehow, I graduated and convinced the BBC to give me a job, where I started in the radio world service in 1978. Studio manager by day and squatter by night, after a year I was so bored that I felt I had to do what everybody else was doing and head to India. The choice – Magic Bus through Afghanistan or hitch-hiking through Africa to get to Mombasa and thence the slow boat to Poona?

I picked the Africa route, but never made it to India. Spending most of my six months there wandering about France, Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Sudan, then back through Egypt with a number of exotic ailments to fly back to (another) squat in London. It was in Sudan that I began to learn about the plight of the Palestinians. By that stage I had learnt that dressing as an Arab was the sensible option for desert life.



Drag queen Peter Gregson

I looked and dressed like a Syrian.

Arabs everywhere welcomed me; each and every one took great pains to turn me Muslim. They never managed but I began, by absorption, to understand the pain of the Palestinians. European travellers I met reported that Israelis were being pretty unkind to this unhappy people.



But it would take me many years before I felt I could or would do anything about it.

I moved to Edinburgh in 1979, where the above photo was taken. I was unemployed, volunteering at Edinburgh Film Workshop, learning how to make films and videos. I joined Labour in 1986 when I was self-employed, then became charity manager of the Video Access Centre, a community video outfit, then off to study IT for a year, then set up another community video outfit Young People Speak Out (YPSO) in '93. I qualified through part-time study in Youth & Community work in '95, and struggled keep that baby YPSO going till 2005 when, poacher turned gamekeeper I landed a job in Regeneration at the City of Edinburgh Council. By this time married with two young sons, I craved an easy life.

I had been active in Labour though. I was political education officer at my local branch for many years; an enthusiasm partly reflected by my production, in 1990, [of the slide-tape/video Radical Reekie](#). However, I left Labour when Blair ordered the invasion of Iraq in 2003, only to rejoin in 2009 when I needed too much to see Labour back into power in Edinburgh.



But life was not to stay easy for long. In 2009 I was disciplined by the Council for the first time, for campaigning against the loss of a teacher from my second son's Primary School; he was turning 5 and entering a class not of 18 (as we'd expected) but a class of 31. My passion for small class sizes led me to set up Kids not Suits, really just a website to campaign from. The name suggesting why spend money on the back office on bureaucrats, when you could spend it on the front line on our children? The inefficiency of government galled me.

The disciplining was a true nightmare, with Unison barely able to protect me. My mental health deteriorated as I was informed I was getting a final written warning. Eventually I recovered through a dose of Mindfulness, well enough in 2012 to do it all again. This time I was fired for campaigning against the closure of [Castlebrae High School](#), and blowing the whistle on a scheming Council officer.



I've written a book on the madness of that time, ("Edinburgh Council: My Journey to Hell and Back") but never published it for fear of the libel laws.

The school stayed open, my campaign for the introduction of [whistleblower hotline at the Council](#) was successful, but I was out of a job. The wife sued for divorce, I lost the house and over half of the access to the kids. Nobody wanted to employ me.

Somehow, through temping at shitty jobs I managed to disinfect my CV, and finally got a permanent job in 2014, in the large public sector body where I remain to this day. I continued to campaign. In 2016 I lodged a petition to the Scottish Parliament [for an NHS staff whistleblower hotline](#). Subsequent campaigning for this led to my falling out with Unite (who sought my dismissal) and Unison (who sought my expulsion) – both battles I won. I sought to become a Labour Councillor in the 2017 elections, but was booted off the panel at the last minute, I suspect by Brian Roy, Labour Scotland General Secretary who seems to think I am a very bad man [I have never met him]. I understand his researchers dug up filth about me, [which can be viewed here](#). It was then determined by the Edinburgh Local Campaign Forum (LCF) that I would, if elected, bring the Labour Party into disrepute. I was very angry about my treatment as I believe the evidence against me to be pretty naff— I almost left the Party in disgust. I stayed because of Corbyn.

I am recently made GMB shop steward. Everything else I care about (apart from my kids) can be found on my website at [www.kidsnotsuits.com](#)

I forgot to mention, as well as continuing to be a single dad to two teenage boys, I am treasurer for the local scout group; I am chairperson of the Friends of Roseburn Park; I am a Community Councillor on Murrayfield Community Council. I continue to be an active member of the Labour Party. I am also looking for a girlfriend.

