



# The Scourge of Soho: The Controversial Career of SAS Hero Detective Sergeant Harry Challenor

MM

*Dick Kirby*

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## **The Scourge of Soho: The Controversial Career of SAS Hero Detective Sergeant Harry Challenor MM** Dick Kirby

The Scourge of Soho describes the dramatic and eventful life of Detective Sergeant Harry Challenor MM and at the same time lifts the lid on front-line policing and the murky world of Soho criminals in the 1950s and 1960s. Born into grinding poverty in 1922, Challenor fought with the Special Air Service during the Second World War, being parachuted behind enemy lines, captured twice, escaping twice. He was awarded the Military Medal. Joining the post-war Metropolitan Police, Challenor spent four years with the elite Flying Squad, before being sent to clear up crime in Soho. Pimps, racketeers and crooks were rounded-up and often found themselves in possession of a bewildering assortment of armaments of which they denied all knowledge. More sensible gangsters, like Reg and Ron Kray, took off as soon as his name was mentioned. Challenor could not be frightened or bought-off, so the gang leaders put up a £1,000 reward to anyone who could frame him. In the end, it was not needed. During a political demonstration in 1963, half-bricks were planted on innocent protesters and three young policemen were imprisoned and Challenor certified as a paranoid schizophrenic and sent to a succession of psychiatric hospitals and care homes. Policeman-turned-author, Dick Kirby has interviewed former friends and colleagues of this determined but flawed character and has meticulously studied court records and official documents. The result is a sensational and gripping account of the man who became The Scourge of Soho. As featured in the East Anglian Daily Times, Bury Mercury and Wolverhampton Magazine.

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