# Emotional discovery on Antiques Roadshow of cartoon linked to Paul McCartney’s 1984 customs incident



On a recent episode of the BBC’s Antiques Roadshow, held at Crystal Palace Park, a guest was brought to tears after hearing the valuation of a cartoon drawn by her late father. Hosted by Fiona Bruce, the programme featured an intriguing piece of memorabilia linked to one of the most controversial incidents in Sir Paul McCartney’s career.

The guest revealed that her father, a senior customs officer at Heathrow Airport during the 1980s and an avid amateur illustrator, had created the cartoon during a significant event. In 1984, when Sir Paul McCartney and his late wife Linda returned to London from Barbados, they were apprehended by customs officers, including the guest’s father, due to suspicions of carrying cannabis—a substance that the couple had been caught with while in Barbados.

The guest recounted, “In Barbados, they had been caught with cannabis. When they came back to Heathrow, my dad’s team received a tip-off essentially saying they thought they were still carrying cannabis. So my dad’s team detained them, they were interviewed. And while Sir Paul was in the interview room, my dad drew this cartoon about what was happening.”

The cartoon depicts McCartney in the interview room with lyrics from the Beatles' song “Yesterday” in a speech bubble above his head. Hilary Kay, the Antiques Roadshow expert examining the item, expressed her amazement at the story behind the drawing, saying, “You’re not serious? So this is absolutely contemporaneous.”

What made the item particularly special was that Sir Paul McCartney himself signed the cartoon, along with an inscription referencing “Pipes of Peace,” one of his hit songs at the time. The guest explained that her father likely showed the sketch to McCartney to lighten the mood during the tense interview. “He’d have just shown him the cartoon because that would have been my dad. He’d have said, ‘look, this is a tense moment, but this might make you laugh. That was my dad all over,” she said.

Despite its later significance, the drawing was never signed by the guest’s father and was considered a quick, informal sketch. The guest said, “I think he would have never expected the cartoon to become valuable. He hasn’t signed it, so that tells me it was just a really quick scribbly thing that he just did. I don’t think my dad valued it at all.”

Hilary Kay estimated the cartoon’s market value between £2,000 and £3,000, highlighting the unique historical context and story behind the piece. The guest became emotional upon hearing the valuation, exclaiming, “Oh my goodness. No.”

Reflecting on the incident at the time outside Heathrow Airport in 1984, Sir Paul McCartney spoke publicly about the cannabis possession, stating, “Yesterday, I was just caught with a small quantity of cannabis. For which I was fined 200 Barbados dollars. I don’t hold any grudges. It didn’t really spoil my holiday. I don’t believe it’s a terribly harmful thing to do, but, if left to my own devices, I would prefer not to say anything about it.”

The Antiques Roadshow continues to air on BBC One, offering viewers a chance to discover the stories and values behind treasured possessions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://tellymix.co.uk/antiques-roadshow-tonight-churchill-cigar-paul-mccartney-cartoon-lego-queen/> - This article supports the claim that the Antiques Roadshow featured a signed Paul McCartney cartoon from the episode held at Crystal Palace Park, confirming the connection to the BBC programme and the item's recognition.
2. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8ov563> - This video source corroborates the story behind the Paul McCartney cartoon on Antiques Roadshow, highlighting the amusing and unique context in which the cartoon was created and signed by McCartney.
3. <https://www.bonhams.com/auction/28540/lot/296/paul-mccartney-an-original-peter-shea-cartoon-signed-and-inscribed-by-paul-mccartney-january-1984/> - This auction listing details an original cartoon by Peter Shea signed and inscribed by Paul McCartney in January 1984, verifying the timeframe and the involvement of Paul McCartney in signing such memorabilia linked to the cannabis incident.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006mj2y> - The official BBC Antiques Roadshow page confirms the ongoing broadcast of the show on BBC One and the format of featuring historical memorabilia, supporting the article’s statement regarding the programme's nature and broadcasting.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/oct/14/paul-mccartney-cannabis-arrest-barbados-1984> - This article documents Paul McCartney's 1984 cannabis possession incident in Barbados and the subsequent events at Heathrow Airport, corroborating the article's background details about the circumstances leading to the cartoon’s creation.
6. <https://www.officialcharts.com/news/paul-mccartney-pipes-of-peace-40th-anniversary-tribute__29384/> - This source verifies the reference to Paul McCartney’s song 'Pipes of Peace' from the same era (1983-1984), linking the inscription on the cartoon to one of his hit songs at the time, as described in the article.
7. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/tv/bbc-antiques-roadshow-guest-emotional-31478685> - Please view link - unable to able to access data