

# UK: Muslim Wins \$2,900 for Not Being Given a Cognac Prize

by Hugh Fitzgerald



One more of those crazy stories involving a Muslim complaining of mistreatment, and getting a court to agree, is [here](#).

*A Muslim porter has successfully sued a five-star country*

**hotel for religious harassment after he won a bottle of Cognac in a raffle – but bosses gave him ‘cheap’ chocolate instead.**

*Managers at the 17th century hotel told Zakaria Kioua that ‘giving a Muslim alcohol was like giving nuts to a person with a nut allergy’, an employment tribunal heard.*

*Mr Kioua, who does not drink, replied ‘religion is not an illness’ and accused hotel staff of ‘theft’ for attempting to fob him off with ‘cheap chocolates’ rather than the French brandy.*

*The 37-year-old, who had originally trained as a vet in Algeria before moving to the UK, was working as a linen porter at the luxurious £400-a-night Lainston House, near Winchester, Hants.*

**At a staff party in January 2017 a raffle took place and although Mr Kioua was not at the event, a ticket he had purchased was drawn and he won a bottle of Cognac.**

*Two members of staff, who were handing out the prizes, realised Mr Kioua did not drink alcohol and ‘on the spur of the moment’ suggested he be given chocolate instead.*

*The housekeeping manager, Patricia Lee, accepted the swap on his behalf despite knowing that Mr Kioua had been given a bottle of Taittinger champagne as a present in the past.*

**Mr Kioua told the tribunal: ‘As a human, I should have been asked. They know I do not have problems receiving alcohol.’**

Yet they also knew that he, Mr. Kioua, did not drink. Apparently he had received a bottle of Taittinger champagne in the past and likely re-gifted it to a non-Muslim. But the people running the raffle assumed he would prefer to receive something he could himself consume; they hit right away on a box of chocolates. There was no malice aforethought.

*When he challenged Ms Lee about the 'cheap box of chocolates' he had been given instead of the expensive liquor, she was apparently 'dismissive'.*

*The employment tribunal, held in Southampton, Hants, heard Mr Kioua then accused Ms Lee of 'theft' for swapping the Cognac.*

***A grievance meeting was held and manager Gaius Wyncoll claimed the gift had been 'tailored' to Mr Kioua and said it was a 'thoughtful gesture' that had nothing to do with religion.***

The switching of the prize was not done to "steal" the Cognac, as Kioua charged Ms. Lee with doing, but to address what the others thought would be a problematic prize for Mr. Kioua. They assumed, in good faith, that as a Muslim he could not drink the Cognac. He had, after all, told everyone he did not drink. As the manager of the hotel, Gaius Wyncoll, said, it was a "thoughtful gesture." But then he added that "it had nothing to do with religion."

That was a strange remark. Of course the substitution of a box of chocolates for the Cognac had everything to do with religion, with the Islamic prohibition on alcohol.. The assumption was that as a Muslim Mr. Kioua could not have consumed the cognac and thus the management made "the thoughtful gesture" of substituting the chocolates.

*He [Gaius Wyncoll] added: '[If] someone has got a nut allergy or a nut intolerance and they were given a box of chocolates that contains nuts do you not feel it would be appropriate that we then change that prize, you know, on the night?'*

***Mr Kioua rejected that explanation and replied: 'It's different. They don't want that prize to be going to me and they've used my religion to get what they want.'***

By all accounts, the hotel had always treated Mr. Kioua well.

No evidence has been presented that they didn't "want that prize to be going to" Mr. Kioua. They were trying only to do right by him, and he tried to turn it into a malevolent wrong.

*He told Mr Wyncoll that 'a religion or belief is not an illness'.*

And no one treated his religious beliefs as an illness. Instead, they treated the Muslim ban on alcohol with the greatest respect, in attempting to accommodate Mr. Kioua's beliefs.

*Nonetheless, his grievance was dismissed and he was told the swap had absolutely 'no connection to religious beliefs'.*

To me that claim makes no sense. So confused and terrified are people in the U.K. of being accused of "islamophobia" that they have in their confusion denied the obvious. The swap had everything to do with accommodating, however imperfectly, Mr. Kioua's religion and its ban on alcohol.

Perhaps what those running the raffle ought to have done, so as to avoid trouble with the litigious Mr. Kioua, is to have substituted for the Cognac not chocolates but a gift certificate equal in value to the Cognac. That should have shut him up. Or maybe not: perhaps he would then claim that "by not awarding me the Cognac, you were making a statement to the staff that 'Mr. Kioua is different from the rest of us.' I found that deeply hurtful."

*The disgruntled porter launched an appeal, which was again thrown out, although he was offered a replacement bottle of Cognac and told 'no offence was intended'.*

Why did Mr. Kioua refuse a replacement bottle of cognac? Because he wanted much more than a bottle of Cognac. He wanted a large financial settlement that would be proper recompense

for his claim of mental anguish. He wanted to stick it, every which way he could, to the Infidels who ran the hotel.

*A short while later, Mr Kioua was forced to go home to look after his sick mother and due to other health issues, he ended up taking a significant amount of time off work.*

*Despite help from the hotel, which offered him substantial support, Mr Kioua resigned in April 2019.*

His employers were clearly determined to bend over backwards for Mr. Kioua. They did not fire him when he missed a great deal of work, as they well might have, but instead offered him “substantial support,” presumably by keeping him on the staff despite his long absences.

*Mr Kioua launched a number of claims against the hotel after his resignation, including victimisation, failure to make reasonable adjustments in respect of disability and constructive unfair dismissal, but all were dismissed.*

All those charges were dismissed because they were entirely without merit. He was not victimized. The hotel made adjustments to accommodate his frequent absences from work. His own claim of “disability” was not accepted. But the mere fact that as soon as he quit – he was not fired – he came up with a laundry-list of complaints to sue about, shows his malevolent attitude toward his former employer, and his determination to squeeze it for all he could get. Thankfully, only one charge was upheld, though many will find that charge, too, was also without merit.

*However, the tribunal awarded him £2,294 in respect of injury to feelings for the Cognac incident and determined Mr Kioua’s claim of harassment related to religion or belief succeeded...*

Mr. Kioua’s feelings were apparently hurt – he’s a sensitive

soul, is Mr. Kioua – when he did not receive the Cognac he had won in a raffle because those running the raffle thought it would offend him, as a Muslim who was not allowed to drink alcohol. They knew he did not drink; he had said so. As a kindness to him they substituted what at once came to mind – a box of chocolates. He sued them for this attempt to be solicitous of his feelings as a Muslim.

What was the poor employer to do? The management tried to accommodate Mr. Kiouwa, by providing him with a non-alcoholic prize, and he sued for mental distress. What if they had done nothing, and awarded him the raffle prize of the bottle of Cognac? Does anyone doubt that Mr. Kiouwa would then have sued for the same mental distress, charging that his employer “knew I did not drink and was giving me a prize he knew I could not enjoy, and holding me up to ridicule before the entire staff, who were all this time making comments about whether I would make an exception since this was a top-of-the-line Napoleon brandy. This caused me grievous mental anguish.”

Mental anguish if he isn't given the Cognac, mental anguish if he is. Mr. Kiouwa, like so many Muslims now in the lands of the Infidels, knows how to play the victim, and pocket the proceeds, which are out of all proportion to the harm supposedly inflicted.

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