

Gangsters

“Watcha gonna do about it?”

By Alan Miles ([email](#)) – Feb 2013

One hot, sunny Tuesday afternoon, I decided to pop into The Bell Pub, I went into the private bar and first had a pee .As I came out of the loo, there stood at the bar was a Scottish bloke I knew called Ian .He called over to me “Hey Alan, come and meet Tommy”. So I walked over to Ian, and he asked me if I wanted a drink. He bought me half a pint of Double Diamond. He said “Say Hello to Tommy”.

This big bloke was known as Tommy Bond, he was quite tall and was built like ‘a brick S*it-house. One story about Tommy was that, one day he left The Bell pub, and crossed the traffic lights near the old cinema stepping out in front of a car, and it was too close for the drivers comfort! In doing so the car screeched to a halt. The driver called out to him something like “Mind out the way you idiot”.

Tommy was upset by this, so he got the car by the bumper with both hands, and lifted the car up in the air, during which the car occupants were shaking about frightened out of their lives. In a way Tommy was a Gentle Giant !.

As I was talking to Ian and Tommy in the pub , the Small Faces came on the jukebox, with Steve Marriott belting-out “Watcha gonna do about it?”.

For some reason I was not introduced to the man left of me who was sat on a stall, by the jukebox. This bloke was really smartly dressed. He wore some good ‘Schmatter’. He sat quietly on his stall, his elbows on his knees, holding a brandy glass which was cupped between his hands. He looked up at me, and he wore a faint smile on his face. It was a kind face, his ears protruded somewhat, and his hair was so neatly cut and it was slightly wavy. He wore a red Fred Perry shirt, silver tonic mohair trousers, and a pair of loafers. As I gave him a nod and a smile, appropriately, The Small Faces were still belting out “Watcha gonna do about it?”

I finished my drink, and left the pub, not knowing at that point that I had met Reggie Kray. This I realised a few years later. Perhaps, I had not been introduced to him as it was presumed that I knew who he was.

My meeting with Ronnie Kray was less pleasant.

Another time, I was talking to the Nash brothers (the Islington lot) while we were in The Bell Public Bar when, one of them raised his glass to his lips and said to me discreetly “ There’s Ronnie Kray over there”. In those days, we were able to look from The Public Bar through to the Lounge Bar, which was a larger bar. Ronnie Kray stood in there at the bar, holding a short, and was dressed in a silver tonic mohair suit. The Lounge was completely empty, I decided for some silly reason to have a

look at him to see what he looked like. So I walked through the Lounge bar to the toilet in the Private Bar.

Upon passing Ronnie Kray, I took a look at him. I would not lie to you, he had the face of the devil; his eyes black and stony, and I felt like I was being gazed at by two hot pokers. I rushed to have my wee, went out through the doors of the Private Bar and walked into The Public Bar so I would not have to see that face again and back to the safety of The Nashes in The Public Bar. It gave me quite a shock.