

barbara windsor and the krays

Barbara Windsor and the Krays have become intertwined in the annals of British pop culture, particularly during the 1960s when the notorious Kray twins ruled London's East End. Windsor, an iconic actress known for her work in the Carry On films and EastEnders, found herself closely linked to the infamous criminal duo, Reggie and Ronnie Kray. This article delves into the fascinating connections between Barbara Windsor and the Krays, exploring her relationships with them, the impact they had on her life, and the broader cultural implications of their intertwined stories.

Barbara Windsor: A Brief Overview

Barbara Windsor was born on August 6, 1937, in Shoreditch, London. She began her acting career in the late 1950s and quickly became a household name through her roles in the Carry On film series, where her bubbly personality and comedic talent shone. Later, she became a beloved character in the British soap opera EastEnders as Peggy Mitchell, further solidifying her status as a national treasure.

Early Career and Rise to Fame

- Initial Roles: Windsor's early work included appearances in various theatre productions and films, but her breakthrough came with the Carry On series, starting with "Carry On Spying" in 1964.
- Iconic Status: Over the next two decades, she starred in multiple Carry On films, becoming synonymous with the franchise's cheeky humor and campy style.
- Television Success: In the 1980s, Windsor transitioned to television, where her role as Peggy Mitchell in EastEnders made her a fixture of British entertainment.

The Kray Twins: A Notorious Legacy

The Kray twins, Reggie and Ronnie, were born in 1933 in Hoxton, London. They became infamous as gangsters during the 1960s, controlling much of London's organized crime. Their reign was marked by violence, intimidation, and a surprising amount of charisma, which garnered them a certain level of celebrity status.

Life and Crimes

- **Criminal Activities:** The Krays were involved in various illegal activities, including armed robbery, protection rackets, and murder. They operated in London's East End and were known for their ruthless enforcement of their criminal enterprises.
- **Public Persona:** Despite their violent reputation, the twins were known to mingle with celebrities and were often seen in high-profile social circles, blurring the lines between crime and celebrity.

Barbara Windsor's Connection to the Krays

The relationship between Barbara Windsor and the Krays began in the vibrant nightlife of London in the 1960s. Windsor, who often frequented clubs and social events in the East End, found herself in the same circles as the infamous twins.

Friendship and Allegiance

- **Social Circle:** Windsor was known to socialize with various figures in the entertainment industry, many of whom were connected to the Krays. This connection inevitably led to encounters with the twins.
- **Supportive Relationship:** While Windsor was not involved in the twins' criminal activities, she developed a friendship with them, especially with Reggie. Her supportive nature and charismatic personality resonated with the twins, who appreciated her company.

Incidents and Anecdotes

- **Nightclub Encounters:** Windsor often recounted stories of her nights out in clubs where the Krays were present. These encounters were filled with glamour but also a palpable sense of danger that surrounded the twins.
- **The Protection Factor:** It's reported that Windsor felt a certain level of safety when she was with the Krays due to their notoriety. Their reputation provided a shield against unwanted advances or trouble during her outings.

The Impact on Windsor's Life and Career

The relationship with the Krays had both positive and negative repercussions for Windsor's life and career. While she enjoyed a level of fame and protection in their company, the association also brought challenges.

Positive Aspects

- Increased Visibility: Windsor's connection with the Krays put her in the spotlight, leading to increased media attention and opportunities within the entertainment industry.
- Cultural Relevance: Being associated with the Krays added a layer of intrigue to Windsor's public persona, making her a more complex character in the eyes of the audience.

Negative Consequences

- Criticism and Backlash: The association with the Krays drew criticism from the media and the public. Some viewed her friendship with the twins as a tarnish on her otherwise wholesome image.
- Legal Troubles: Windsor occasionally found herself caught in the fallout of the Krays' criminal activities, facing scrutiny and speculation about her own involvement.

Legacy and Reflection

As the years went by, Barbara Windsor's relationship with the Krays became a part of her legacy, illustrating the complexities of fame, friendship, and morality. Windsor continued to thrive in her career, earning accolades and admiration from fans, while the Krays' story ended in tragedy.

Windsor's Later Years

- Continued Success: Windsor remained active in television and film, often reflecting on her past experiences with humor and nostalgia.
- Advocacy: In her later years, Windsor became an advocate for various causes, including Alzheimer's research, raising awareness and funds following her own diagnosis.

Public Perception and Cultural Impact

- Iconic Status: Windsor's status as a cultural icon remained intact, and her ties to the Krays became part of the narrative that defined the swinging sixties in London.
- Media Portrayals: The stories of Barbara Windsor and the Krays have been depicted in several films and documentaries, highlighting the intertwining of crime and celebrity in British culture.

Conclusion

The connection between Barbara Windsor and the Krays is a fascinating chapter in the history of British entertainment and crime. Windsor's glamorous yet tumultuous relationship with the notorious twins exemplifies the complexities of fame and the thin line between admiration and danger. As a beloved figure in British culture, Barbara Windsor's legacy continues to thrive, reminding us of an era filled with both charm and chaos. Her story, intertwined with that of the Krays, remains a captivating narrative that reflects the intricate tapestry of society, celebrity, and crime in mid-20th century London.

Frequently Asked Questions

What was Barbara Windsor's relationship with the Kray twins?

Barbara Windsor had a close friendship with the Kray twins, Ronnie and Reggie, who were infamous London gangsters. She socialized with them during the 1960s and was known to have been supportive of them, often attending their parties and events.

Did Barbara Windsor ever portray a character related to the Kray twins?

Yes, Barbara Windsor played a role in the 1990 film 'The Krays,' where she portrayed herself, reflecting her connection to the notorious twins and the London underworld they operated in.

How did Barbara Windsor's connection to the Krays impact her career?

While her association with the Krays brought her media attention, it also posed challenges, as some questioned her choices. However, it did not significantly hinder her career, and she continued to be a beloved figure in British entertainment.

What did Barbara Windsor think of the Kray twins?

Barbara Windsor expressed a fondness for the Kray twins, acknowledging their charm and charisma. However, she also recognized their violent lifestyles and the dangers associated with their criminal activities.

How did the public view Barbara Windsor's friendship with the Krays?

Public opinion was mixed; some admired her for her boldness and connection to the notorious figures, while others criticized her for associating with criminals. Windsor remained a popular cultural icon regardless of these views.

What did Barbara Windsor reveal about her experiences with the Krays in interviews?

In various interviews, Barbara Windsor shared anecdotes about her experiences with the Krays, often describing the fun and glamorous aspects of their lifestyle while also acknowledging the underlying dangers and criminality of their world.

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