

# Old school policing



Jon Gaunt, presenter on *TalkSport* radio and columnist for *The Sun*

Jon Gaunt is the son of a policeman who worked on the streets of Coventry for more than 30 years. Here is an extract from his book, *It's Called Great Britain, Not Rubbish Britain* on the issues facing British policing.

Despite being led by politically correct clowns the British police force is still the best in the world. My old man was a copper in Coventry for 30 years and he was definitely of the old school. He just wanted to nick bad 'uns rather than take diversity courses or understand why little Johnny was a toe-rag and as he used to say, at least in those days, 'We actually got people sent down.'

As a kid I lived in a police house right in the heart of the community and that made my dad, my mum and the rest of the family an integral part of the community. Dad and our neighbours in the other three police houses would sort out trouble when it flared in the chippie or the pub and our mums would act almost like vicars' wives or counsellors to other women in the neighbourhood.

The cliché of the clip around the ear was a cliché because it was true but it meant that people knew my dad and clearly understood what would happen if they stepped out of line. There was respect but there was also fear and we need a bit more of that today. You can't police the streets from a Panda car and my old man would swear that the streets became more dangerous once coppers like him were taken off the beat and the old police boxes were demolished.

My dad didn't want to understand or know why a criminal

committed a crime, he wasn't interested, it wasn't his job; all he wanted to do was nick them and get them off the street. That's what most of us want, isn't it? Real coppers who will police. That's why the growth of 'Plastic Plods' is so dangerous and why the Police Federation are right to be concerned about the number of real coppers being slashed and replaced by these community officers who have no more powers of arrest than you and me.

The kinds of health and safety experts who stand by and let kids drown rather than risk their own necks to save them.

What we need is real coppers working the same area day in day out for year after year. Britain was a safer, friendlier, less crime-ridden and, yes, greater country back when my dad and his sort were on the streets and if we ever want to put the great back into Britain we need a return to some of these values and practices.

I know just how dedicated these men and women are and every year I am privileged to be a guest at the Police Bravery Awards where the Police Federation and *The Sun* recognise the incredible work and dangers our boys and girls do and face every single day. The event has so many video re-enactments of real crimes and acts of bravery by police officers that it is almost unfair to single out any but last year I was extremely moved and thankful for the story of the two coppers who actually defused the car bomb that had been towed to Park Lane. When you speak to the winners of these awards later over a pint they are so unassuming and modest about their bravery it is actually quite humbling to be in their company.

It's time for Britain's top cops to start listening to their own rank and file and the British public and give us the kind of police force we want and the current state of Broken Britain demands.

- Gaunt's Best of British – *It's Called Great Britain Not Rubbish Britain* is published by Virgin Books. It is available in hardback for £18.99.

What do you think?

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