

David hare's murmuring judges



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In *Murmuring Judges*, David Hare uses Barry to represent the stereotypical 'bent' policemen that were seen as typical in the late 1980s and early 90s. Through Barry, Hare shows not only corruption in the police force, as evidenced by Barry planting the Semtex, but also suggests that the police were overworked and under budgeted, "too much overtime". Here, Hare shows the dichotomy of sympathy for the police alongside corruption, as he shows Barry to be trying to do his job in difficult times, however, the overarching role of Barry is to show corruption and immorality in policing.

Throughout the play, Hare shows the effect of the 1984 Criminal Evidence Act, intended to make policing more about paperwork, and shows how the police feel it is undermining their job; "we should all just sit in the nick and make policy drafts" highlights how this has changed the nature of policing. Barry is presented as against this, and continues to use older methods of policing, "It's my method." Through this, Hare portrays police corruption, as Barry's methods are often immoral and even illegal.

Hare also presents Barry to see some crimes as "boring" and "pointless", which suggests he is only interested in crimes he can get a good result for, such as bringing down Travis and Fielding in Gerard McKinnon's crime. Hare also shows Barry to think police resources are wasted by saying "and yet look at us", highlighting his personal frustration as again shown by "please tell me, what is the point?" Interestingly, Barry seemingly has the same perception of lawyers as the audience have through Sir Peter, suggesting they are "rich bastards" who participate in "tax evasion".

It could then be argued that Barry feels justified in his corruption, as the government is also corrupt, " the government happily lets rich bastards walk away with". " You used to be smart" suggests Barry wasn't always corrupt, which again suggests his actions are due to his frustration at the justice system. The relationship between Barry and Sandra gives the audience insight into both Barry's character and feelings towards women at the time. Although there is a difference in rank between the pair, DC to PC, Barry is never shown to treat men in a lesser position with the same patronising manner he uses towards Sandra.

Here, Hare portrays sexism within the police at the time, which is furthered by Sandra and Barry's affair, as it could be argued that Sandra is stereotypically ' sleeping her way to the top'. Hare shows Barry to " get a kick out of secrecy", which is in reference to his affair but is also evidenced in his corruption, as no-one else is portrayed in this manner. The fact that Barry is shown to be " relieved at the change of subject" from his corruption could suggest that he is ashamed, as he is " able to relax" once they are discussing something else.

However, Barry's lack of personal morals as highlighted in his relationship with Sandra, " I waited for you...I had a rugby match", which suggests a general disregard could be used to argue that Barry most likely is indifferent about having planted the Semtex. This representation of the police as reckless and immoral suggests Hare views the police in a negative light as they would allow innocent men to go to prison, as shown by Gerard. This was undoubtedly influenced by high profile cases such as the Guilford Four or the Birmingham Six, where men were unjustly sent down for bombings. I did my <https://assignbuster.com/david-hares-murmuring-judges/>

trick. It always works” suggests the extent of Barry corruption, implying he has framed people before, but more importantly, he knows he can get away with it, through which Hare shows the dangers of immorality in the police. “You should go on Mastermind” in reference to Barry shows that he is a respected figure in amongst the officers, with which Hare could suggest that Barry was in a position to spread corruption throughout the force, as he is admired by the lower ranks. Hare uses this again to highlight the danger of immorality and corruption in the police.

Earlier, Barry is also presented as part of the ‘boys club’, as Hare shows banter between the male officers, “I was conducting an interview... with the barmaid... horizontally”, suggesting that Barry is one of the ‘lads’.

Increasingly, Barry is presented as a misogynist and a racist throughout the play, not only towards Sandra but also towards Irina and Gerard. This attitude is shown through the dialogue between Barry and Irina on pg101; “I don’t take lectures” towards Irina suggests he sees her as beneath him.

However, Hare also uses this scene to strengthen the presentation of Barry’s disliking towards lawyers, as shown by “when was the last time anyone was sick on your wig”, which suggests Barry sees lawyers as out of touch with the real job of justice. This is furthered by “why don’t you go sit on a committee, ironic as Irina does exactly that at the end of the play, which shows Barry to believe lawyers to be bossy, and “something-must-be-done’rs”, as Beckett describes them, but ultimately to be useless.

At the end of the play, as earlier mentioned, Irina decides to try and change the justice system; in contrast, Barry is presented as exactly the same, as he

is still frustrated at the system, " if they spent half the time trying to support the coppers". In the earlier scene, Hare portrays Jimmy as out of the club, which is highlighted by Barry saying " English sense of humour", again showing Barry to be part of a very, male dominated system.

Hare also presents Barry as casually racist here, as there is no evidence that Jimmy is not English, an attitude which is also shown by Barry towards Gerard, " he was kind of Irish", a reference to the negative view of the Irish at the time due to the IRA. This also shows the system to be casually racist, as we see that because Gerard is Irish, it is much more believable that he would plant explosives. Hare shows this to be wrong through his portrayal of Gerard, who is hugely different from the stereotype of a criminal.

To a lesser extent, police corruption is also shown by Barry's treatment of Keith, as Barry is suggested to have " promised him a caution" suggesting Barry was using bribery to get Keith to cooperate. Overall, despite the suggestion of sympathy for Barry as someone trying to do a difficult job, Barry is largely presented as everything Hare dislikes about the police, as he is shown to be racist, corrupt, immoral and misogynistic. Hare uses Barry as an example of wider police corruption, suggesting that Barry isn't an isolated case but the whole system is corrupt.

Barry is juxtaposed against Sandra who is shown to be conscientious and willing to make a difference. However, Hare presents all characters trying to make the system better as isolated and seen as inferior, as shown with Irina, whilst Barry is shown as ' one of the boys', overall suggesting that people like Barry will ultimately continue with " their method" whilst Sandra and

such will fail to make a difference. This representation is shown to be the worn outcome for Hare, who is a supporter of change but this represents the reality of policing at the time.