

How the film 'let him



In the film ' Let him have it' Peter Medak employs a variety of techniques in order to create sympathy, for Derek Bentley. The story focuses on the injustice of a trial, which saw Bentley, given the death penalty, for a crime he was completely innocent of.

Medak uses lighting, camera shots, costume, setting, dialogue, plot and music to convince us this punishment is unfair and he tries to create sympathy in the viewers. The story is about two young lads, Derek Bentley, 19 and Christopher Craig, 16 who are good friends and who are caught committing a crime. During this scene Chris Craig shoots an innocent police officer in the head with a single bullet. The two young lads are taken to court and both are found guilty. Derek is shown no mercy and is sentenced to the death penalty of being hung whilst Chris is sentenced to 10 years.

The director gains sympathy for Derek, starting from his childhood. The film starts with a dramatic scene showing that Derek was involved in a serious incident, an air-raid, during the second world war in which he was buried under a pile of rubble. His sister Iris tried to rescue him but he suffered serious injuries. This incident affected him and caused him brain damage, which led to epilepsy and a mental age of 11. We find out that Derek's epilepsy gets worse when he is caught vandalising a shed with his friends. While being caught by the owner of the shed Derek is left alone with the keeper and suffers from an epileptic fit.

At this moment the camera focuses onto Derek's face with a sharp light. This is done to make the director win sympathy from the audience. From having this epileptic fit, Derek was sent to an approved school where they tried to

treat his mental illness. The director has added this particular scene to makes us feel sympathy for Bentley. While Derek was in this approved school he was a misfit so the authority decided he would be better off in his own home.

Bentley's facial expressions and actions convey to us that he was obscured whilst in the approved school. He is better at his own home, as he is not confident enough to make new friends in the school and spend time with his friends. It takes him one year to regain his confidence, as he is tense whilst at home and during this period he did not have the confidence to meet his friends or go out of his own room. At this time there is a scene between Iris and Derek. It shows that Iris cares so much about her brother that she brought comics to keep him busy. In the bedroom the lighting is dark as the curtains were closed and as soon as Iris opened them it indicated that Derek was not used to it as he put his arm over his eyes to cover them from the sunlight and his face was downwards.

The room was full of smoke from Bentley having cigarettes, as he is probably very stressed. Another scene that Medak adds in the film to make sympathy for Derek is the scene on the roof where the two friends try to break into a warehouse. As they are going to climb over the gates Craig passes Bentley a weapon, a knuckle-duster in case they needed to use it. This implies that Bentley was just accepting a gift of friendship, and told also that they were ready to use it if any force is necessary. After a couple of minutes they panic as they hear the police sirens and Bentley's face goes red and tense.

Then the police officers made their way to the roof where the two friends lay. The police attempts to negotiate with Craig as he had the gun but Craig ignores them and shoots one of the police officer's arms. Then the police came to close to Craig so then Derek was getting very impatient and scared so he shouted to Chris, " Let him have it", which meant surrender and give the police the gun but by the police it was thoroughly misunderstood, as shoot the officers and use force on them. Then Craig shot an innocent police officer in the head with a single bullet.

The sympathy for Derek at this moment is created because he tries to help the policemen but the other officer's stops him and held him. Medak adds a section in when Craig starts firing into the thin air because he wants to make us realize that he won't give up but Derek will and surrender and that Chris will try and fight his way out. Another part is that whilst going down the steps when arrested, the officers that were standing there probably were harassing him physically by punching and kicking him as he had bruises and dark patches on his face. The trial was another scene that made the viewers feel sympathy for Derek. Throughout the trial Derek looks confused and scared. He also keeps his head down which indicates he is frightened.

As the camera focuses on his face, you can see the cuts and bruises that the police officers had done whilst being arrested which creates sympathy. The camera focuses on the main people in the courtroom such as his family, the judge and the jury. From this scene, the judge seemed a bit biased towards the officers as he said, " These officers showed conspicuous gallantry, are you going to say they are conspicuous lies." When it was time for the prosecutor to ask Derek questions he is prompted and in return he looks for

reassurance from his sister and also looks around for help from his friends and family. He also answers the questions slowly, which is due to his mental disability. In comparison Chris Craig throughout the trial has a small smirk, which indicates that he does not care about the sentence, as he wants to be like his brother who is also in jail and that he knows that he cannot get the death penalty because of his age.

He has his arm in a sling, which creates sympathy. In the courtroom the place is tense and people are trapped, which creates tension for the two victims. There is a sound of a violin when Derek gets tense and when he is unable to answer the question quickly enough. In the trial Bentley is very polite to the judge as when answering a question he says, " Yes sir", " No sir". As the verdict was announced for Bentley there was an inward breath, which makes you feel sympathy for Derek.

His face is in shock. When the verdict for Craig was announced he still had a smirk on his face and began to laugh a bit. His face calmed down when he turned to face Bentley and you could see that he felt sorry for what he did. When Bentley was taken down to the cell the lighting darkens which could indicate that he would never see daylight again. The final, most dramatic scene was the execution of the two so-called murderers.

It starts off having a bird's eye view of the family's living room where the family are sitting down and drowning their sorrows, as it was the day of their oldest son's execution. The director must have added this scene, as he wanted to compare it to the same room at the end of the film, as it is full of noises of crying. The camera then moves to the center of the innocent face

of Derek as he sits on the floor of his cell room and starts praying in his room. This creates sympathy for Derek as he is getting rid of the hatred in him. The scene then jumps to Bentley's house as the families get up and cuddle each other whilst crying their eyes out.

This creates sympathy for the family and Derek. A few seconds before the execution takes place the officers give Derek a last drink of whiskey to calm his nerves. Then the sound of a knock is heard and the officers in charge get hold of Derek and secure him up. The sympathy for Derek is in that they did not seem to ask him for any last words or sayings, as they did not care about him that or they were hurrying him to execute him which sounds brutal.

Outside the execution place there is a group of people with banners up and praying to Derek as they were on his side of innocent. The sounds at this moment were of the people singing and Derek's family crying. On the day, the families were wearing very dull colours, as it was a very sad day for them. The last moment that Derek sees light is when a black cloth is put over his head and the sound you hear is a very deep gasping. When Derek was walking towards the noose, he was trying to hold back which shows he was scared of dieing. When the camera zooms into the house, it symbolizes Bentley's spirit coming back home and re-uniting with his family.

From the film, the director, Peter Medak won his way of achieving sympathy for Derek Bentley. He uses techniques such as camera shots, costume, lighting and facial expressions to convince us that the punishment set to Derek Bentley is unfair and has gained his way to create sympathy in the viewers. The scene that created the most sympathy for the audience is the

execution scene as it was his last few minutes to live. Also the prosecutor uses emotive language against Derek and Craig to swerve the jury to make the right decision and both, the judge and jury had made their point.