# How Does Peter Medak Gain Sympathy For Derick Bentley In The Film "Let Him Have It"

In this essay I will be stating how Peter Medak, director of the film "Let Him Have It", gains sympathy from the viewer for Derek Bentley.

Derek Bentley is a weird case, he is an innocent minded boy growing up in a rough society and because of the bad vibe in the part of London he lives in he gets himself caught up in a lot of trouble eventually leading to his death by hanging. The story is set in the 1950's and Derek Bentley is 19. When he was a small boy in the war he was caught in a bombing raid and was hit on the head with a falling brick. When he got a little older doctors diagnosed him with the disorder of epilepsy, in doing so the doctor also states that Derek has learning disabilities so he automatically gets sent to an approved school which has a lot of bad influences on him. This made me feel sorry for Derek because the director tried to create the sense that it wasn't Derek's fault that he got put in with the bad influences thus giving Derek an excuse for any bad behaviour. During the entire film Derek has 5 - 10 epileptic fits, which made me feel sympathy for him because Peter Medak made me feel like Derek was always the victim in everything bad or good he did and that because of a slight bit of epilepsy it is impossible to think what is right and what is wrong.

In the film we see that Derek has no love life what so ever, he does feel a lot of love for his sister but it is unclear what sort of love it is. When in secondary school Derek and a few bad eggs went to watchman's hut and proceeded to destroy the place it is clear Peter Medak (the director) tries to make the audience feel that Derek is still doing it innocently like it is just a practical joke. Later on the watchman comes back and all of Derek's "friends" run away but Derek stays and when the watchman finds him he has an epileptic fit. In my mind Peter Medak makes a big deal of this because it makes the viewers

He is then sent to an approved school. He got out because of his fits and it was getting too rough for him in there. After that we catch up with Derek when he is 19 and he has been in his room for almost a year, he has not even left the house for two minutes. His sister persuades him to go out with her and buy a record at the shop that he has been listening to on all of his radios. He has many kept in the shed, which is another sympathy grabbing part of Derek's life.

Derek's sister is very protective of Derek, almost like his mother, she helps him do a lot; she is very encouraging to Derek. Medak shows this in many places in the film creating sympathy for Derek by showing that he needs to be taken care of like a kid. Somehow Derek gets himself tied up with more bad eggs, namely Chris Craig and his gang. Derek does things like steal the keys from the fish shop and give them to Chris to try and be cool and fit in with the gang. Then Chris's friends ditch

him and he and Derek go to the local factory to try and rob it. They climb to the roof but someone from across the street sees them and phones the police. Derek says he does not want to do the job, gaining sympathy from the viewer by making it look like Derek was totally innocent again and did not want to be involved in this mess in the first place.

After a while policemen turn up and start climbing up to the top of the roof. One of the policemen gets shot after Derek shouts those famous words, "Let Him Have It, Chris". Mayhem ensued and during it Chris returned to a safe shooting position and Derek was temporarily arrested by the policeman who had been shot. After a few minutes of viewing time, Sidney George Miles (policeman with a death wish) ran out without any form of protection and was shot in the head. Then Derek tried to tell Chris to stop and to give up and hand in his gun but Chris replies by saying he'll shoot him if he didn't get out the way, another example of Peter Medak trying to gain sympathy from the viewer by once again proclaiming that Derek does not want to be involved or in anyway linked up to anymore of this terrible crime. Before they even got onto the roof, Chris gave Derek a knuckle-duster; Derrick saw this more as a gift than a weapon that could kill. To me this shows Peter Medaks way of gaining sympathy for Derek by showing his naivety as if he were just a child and did not know what sort of damage this sort of weapon could do and saw it more as a toy that Chris had given him.

The court case was very short and they convicted Derek of insight to murder and he was sentenced to death by hanging. During the sentence Derek had many people supporting him for example the letters of sympathy that would come through the post every morning whilst the trial was taking place. He said many things that gained lots of sympathy from the viewer, the sort of things a naive child would say when he doesn't quite know what is going on but knows he's in trouble. Peter Medak inserts these comments said by Derek to make the viewer believe that Derek, although in a fully-grown, fully matured mans body is still a child at heart and in his mind.

The day before his death sentence was to be carried out he wrote a final letter to his loving, caring family. Although Derek did not write the letter because he was illiterate so he dictated it to a policeman this made me feel more like Derek was just an innocent child caught up in a whole lot of mess. Derek does sign it himself in very childish writing and it took him almost thirty seconds to do so. With the background music and atmosphere it is a very moving scene and definitely made me feel a lot of sympathy for the poor Derek Bentley. The next day the sentence is carried out very brutally and quickly and made me feel like it didn't do Derek justice or any man justice in fact.

Overall Peter Medak does a very good job of making the viewer (me) feel a lot of sympathy for Derek and his whole family. It also made me feel annoyed at such a miscarriage of justice, and also made me feel like I wished I could of gone back in time and change the overall situation and outcome. By just using a few movie tricks Peter Medak can make you feel any emotion capable to human beings. This is because he relates us with the situation I didn't feel like I was just watching Derrick I felt like I was helping him or giving him moral support. I am glad his sister carried on pursuing the case and clearing poor Derek Bentley's name.