

Expletive-ridden court rant by murder accused

MURDER accused Frederick 'Freddie' Thompson shouted obscenities in court yesterday morning after he was refused bail by a High Court judge.

Mr Thompson, 36, with an address at Loreto Road, Maryland, Dublin 8, is charged with the murder of David Douglas, 55, at Bridgefoot Street in Dublin on July 1, 2016.

When Mr Justice Paul McDermott said he was refusing to grant the bail application yesterday morning, Mr Thompson, who was dressed in a grey zip-up jumper, stood up and shouted: 'F*** off, I'm not listening to that.' He then proceeded to walk towards the door of the holding area.

By Alison O'Riordan

Prison officers tried to bring him back before the judge but he continued to shout: 'I'm not f***** going back in', and 'the state of this country. You are all the same'.

Two women who had been present in the court to support Mr Thompson then left the courtroom before the judge had finished his ruling.

The judge said yesterday that he was rejecting Mr Thompson's bail application on several grounds, including that he was a flight risk.

Mr Thompson had sought bail in the High Court on Monday. However, the State objected

to the application.

At Monday's bail hearing, Sergeant Brendan Brogan, from Pearse Street Garda station, told Ronan Prendergast BL, for the State, that he was objecting to bail because of the 'seriousness' of the charge.

Sergeant Brogan also told the court he believed that if the applicant was released on bail he would be a flight risk.

Another ground for objection, the court heard, was Sergeant Brogan's fear that if the accused man was released on bail it could result in further serious offences being committed.

Mr Thompson was remanded in custody.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Those simple things worth fighting for...

THERE is a moment in Robert Harris's novel Munich which gave me profound pause. Munich is the story of how, in September 1938, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain sought to save Europe from Nazi aggression.

The most remarkable aspect of Harris's treatment is that you see Chamberlain, not as an appeaser of Hitler, but as a courageous statesman who did all he could to prevent global suffering.

The Munich agreement served only to delay the inevitable. Within a year, Hitler had consumed Czechoslovakia and was preparing to smash Poland. Chamberlain failed to prevent war, but he bought Hitler's enemies vital time to rearm and prepare for conflict.

What's more, Chamberlain's attempt to secure peace may have won the war for the Allies. In an epigraph to the book, Harris cites Hitler speaking in February 1945, months before his downfall. 'We ought to have gone to war in 1938,' he remarks. 'September 1938 would have been the most favourable date.' In other words, had Chamberlain not interfered with Hitler's timetable for war, the Nazis may well have triumphed over an ill-prepared enemy.

Neville Chamberlain died on November 9, 1940. He would not live to see Hitler defeated or the diabolical consequences of Nazi genocide. But he went to his grave knowing that he did everything, however unsuccessfully, to tame 'this wild beast, which has sprung out of his lair upon us'.

I have spent two decades writing in opposition to tyranny, dictatorship and despotism. I don't believe it is ever morally right to appease a bully. However, having read Harris's beautifully crafted novel, I am convinced that Chamberlain was no appeaser, but a moral titan.

When the Munich agreement was signed, Chamberlain returned to his hotel to the euphoric adulation of ordinary Germans. As he prepared for a private meeting with Hitler the following morning, he heard his name chanted from the street. As Harris describes it, when the prime minister stepped out on to the small balcony of his room, 'the din became tremendous'.

And then, as Chamberlain returned to his room, he uttered those words which gave me pause: 'How very humbling. You see, gentlemen, it is the same in every country - ordinary people the

world over want nothing more than to live their lives in peace, to cherish their children and their families, and to enjoy the fruits that nature, art and science have to offer them. That is what I wish to say to Hitler.'

Of course, those words were put into Chamberlain's mouth by Harris. Even so, the sentiment captures everything that was noble and good in a man who was so shamefully maligned by history. It captures everything we all want.

I placed the book on my knee, knowing I had just read something extraordinary. To live our lives in peace, to cherish our children and our families, to enjoy the fruits of nature, art and science - what more could any human being long for? And when we are forced to fight tyranny, it is in defence of our right to enjoy those simple things.

As I pondered, I could hear our eldest singing:

*'Can't say how the days will unfold,
Can't change what the future may hold.
But, I want you in it,
Every hour, every minute'*

IN the background, our middle son was explaining to his mother why Captain America is such a superior superhero. Before me stood an apparition of some ghastly creature in ill-fitting riding boots.

It was a scene so simple, so familiar in so many households across the country. The father reading, the mother smiling with love, the sons letting the imagination soar. This, I thought, is what maddens the tyrant but which, for the rest of us, makes life worthwhile.

There is no new ending to Munich. We all know how things eventually turned out. Despite Chamberlain's best efforts, the wild beast sprung from his lair and caused untold carnage.

However, the point of Harris's novel was not to change history, but to make us more aware of what it was that Chamberlain was trying to prevent. He was speaking on behalf of those like you and me - people who cherish the simple yet wonderful things of life. He was trying to make a madman see that not everyone shared his vision of murder and mayhem.

In his tragically heroic way, Chamberlain was speaking to all those who have ever sought to prevent little children sing, laugh and wear ill-fitting boots.

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