

Drumm's trial told of 'differing recollections'

ANGLO Irish Bank's former company secretary and the head of the bank's audit committee had differing recollections of what was said at a meeting about Anglo's loan of €7.2billion to Irish Life and Permanent, David Drumm's trial has heard.

The trial also heard that Anglo's audit committee was an independent watchdog tasked with overseeing management's activities. Natasha Mercer, former company secretary at the bank, agreed with Brendan Grehan SC, defending, that the committee's job was to challenge management if things were not being done in an appropriate manner.

By Sarah-Jane Murphy

Mr Drumm, 51, of Skerries, Co. Dublin, has denied conspiring with former bank officials Denis Casey, William McAteer, John Bowe and others to defraud depositors and investors at Anglo by 'dishonestly' creating the impression that deposits in 2008 were €7.2billion larger than they were.

The former bank CEO has also pleaded not guilty to false accounting on December 3, 2008, by furnishing information to the market that Anglo's 2008 deposits were €7.2billion larger than they were.

On day 27 of the trial, Mary Rose Gearty, SC, prosecuting,

asked Ms Mercer about draft minutes of an audit committee meeting on November 18, 2008. The witness said she and Gary McGann, the head of the audit committee, had differing recollections of what was said at that meeting about Anglo's loan of €7.2billion to ILP in September 2008.

She agreed with Ms Gearty that Mr McGann said he wanted his description of the ILP transactions, which was 'customer deposits', to be included in the final version of the minutes.

On Monday, the jury heard Ms Mercer had not mentioned customer deposits in the draft minutes that she circulated. The trial continues.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

In his darkest hour, Churchill proved he was a moral titan

IDIDN'T know what to expect as the lights dimmed in the cinema. My wife had already seen *Darkest Hour* and was determined that I should also view it on the big screen. 'You will love it,' she said, knowing that its central protagonist has always been an enormous influence on my life.

I was doubtful. How could anyone, least of all an actor like Gary Oldman, play someone as complex and charismatic as Winston Churchill? How could he capture the moral greatness of that flawed hero who resisted Hitler when others ran for cover?

The film charts the tense events that led to Churchill's premiership in 1940, his defiance in the face of seeming disaster and his refusal to countenance any accommodation with the Nazis. The fact that Gary Oldman has just won this year's Bafta Leading Actor award tells its own story. In my view, he should also secure an Oscar for what was a spellbinding performance.

There are many, not least in this country, who consider Winston Churchill a warmonger with a bloody legacy. The question for such people to answer is this: would it have been preferable to live under the Nazis? For without Churchill's tenacity, his moral grit and courage, that is how we would have ended up.

Oldman summed it up perfectly in his Bafta acceptance speech, when he said of Churchill: 'He held the line of honour and freedom and integrity. For his nation and the world.' Is there any contemporary politician of which such things could be said today?

That is why I was thrilled when our eldest son asked if he could see the movie with me. In an era of soundbites and spin, one in which public figures are airbrushed to perfection, it is such a lesson in virtue to see how it once was. My young son saw that you don't have to be perfect to be someone possessed of moral character.

Churchill was an alcoholic, and was highly temperamental and eccentric. None of his eccentricities is concealed in *Darkest Hour*. But it is this which makes the film such a masterpiece.

We see a man full of personal flaws and yet so full of virtue. Here

is someone for whom there is no ambiguity between good and evil. Here is a man who will make neither excuse nor apology for confronting bullies – even when victory cannot be assured.

Churchill, flawed and unpredictable, stood before his nation and did not deny the danger: 'We have before us many, many long months of struggle and suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I will say: it is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.'

No spin, only valour, courage and truth. For that is the true definition of courage: knowing the extent of the danger and yet standing firm in the face of it. Where is the courage in sitting behind a screen lampooning your opponents? Compared to such cowardice, Churchill was a moral titan.

As the credits rolled at the end of the film, I found myself scrambling to wipe away my tears before the lights came on. Why was I so emotional? Knowing that, against all the odds, he finally broke the bullies was one reason. More importantly, I saw that my son now knew the true nature of courage and nobility of spirit.

ONLY by example can you teach a young person the meaning of right and wrong, of love, sacrifice and redemption. You need to place before them inspiring role models that exemplify the best that human life has to offer. And then, you simply need to say: 'Imitate that.'

We left the cinema in silence. Driving home, I said: 'You may not understand it now, but you have just received a gift wrapped in moral perfection.' My son simply nodded his head and we spoke no more about it.

And that, in the end, is why *Darkest Hour* deserves all the acclaim it gets.

Our world is now so starved of true moral role models, so devoid of those who can inspire us all to 'move forward into broad, sunlit uplands'.

But thanks to this fine portrait of someone for whom cowardice was never an option, my son's generation might just learn how to avoid 'the long night of barbarism'.

—mark.dooley@dailymail.ie—



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