

AGIT - PROP

This is short for agitational propaganda - a kind of political theatre. It's designed to make you sit up & think. Actors act out & explain recent events. One agit-prop company called itself the 'living newspaper'. DARIO FO is an Italian performer, director & writer who took plays into all sorts of places eg. factories. This was to make sure ordinary, working class people saw the plays. One of his plays is called 'ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST'. This play uses farce style. The 'over the top' comedy is used to bring out the tragedy of a death - the suspect is killed during a police interview.

A bomb has exploded in a bank which kills 16 people. The police arrest a man [anarchist] & interrogate him. During this, the anarchist is supposed to have jumped out a window from the 4th floor. The police try to cover this up by claiming he committed suicide. Later it is proved the 'suspect' was innocent. The 'Maniac' pretends to be a judge investigating the death. He questions the police to try to trick them into admitting their guilt!

MANIAC Set the scene.

CONSTABLE *[hesitant]* Er ..it's midnight.. *[Maniac makes an owl sound. Others help create atmosphere]* There are 5 of us in the room.

SUPERINTENDENT I'd just stepped out....

MANIAC Ssssh!

CON. And ... er...

MANIAC Those two?

CON. Yes.
[Pisani stares at constable]

MANIAC What are they doing?

CON. Interrogating the subject.

MANIAC Still? After all these hours? Must be knackered? *[imitates police]* 'Where were you on the night of..' 'Don't play dumb with me' on & on .You must be exasperated.

PISANI Just a bit.

MANIAC I expect you fancy roughing him up a bit?

PISANI *[defensive]* Never touched him!

SUPER. Very calm the whole proceedings.

MANIAC Don't get me wrong. Just a little slap across the chops?

PISANI Never got near him.

MANIAC Bit of massage to relieve tensions [*he starts to massage CONSTABLE*] .. Shoulders full of cramps...yes...

CONS Left a bit.

MANIAC After all those hours..& then..*[sudden karate chop]* Ka!Ya!Agh!

PISANI [*annoyed*] There was no violence, no massage, no karate.. It was all above board, according to regulations. We were conducting our enquiries in a light-hearted manner.

MANIAC You *were* interrogating him?

SUPER. We were having a bit of a laugh with him.

MANIAC Paper hats? Stick the tail on the donkey?

CON. It was just the odd joke, your honour, you should see the inspector when he's on form. Hilarious!

MANIAC Especially when interrogating mass murder suspects.

CON Especially then. Ha, Er....

MANIAC So you're a bit of a wag, Inspector. Don't be modest, give us a quick dose.

CON Go on sir.

[Pisani tells jokes. Takes applause]

MANIAC Did you tell the suspect that one?

PISANI Yes.

MANIAC No wonder he jumped.