



The Funny Thing About...

The Funny Thing About... Judges

Professor Gary Slapper:

A judge in 1975 said that ideally you shouldn't be able to imagine a judge in the bath. If you can, something's gone wrong with the judicial nature of the character.

Professor Gary Slapper: Knitting while on the bench. Drinking sherry and other alcoholic beverages.

Reading "The Times" if they found a witness particularly boring, doing the crosswords. Giving judgements in their pyjamas. All human life is there, or a significant part of it.

Andi Osho:

So we're on the bus, right, and the bus is crawling down the bus lane and this girl shouts out, she shouts out across the whole bus, she shouts out "Oi driver, hurry up mate, some of us have got to go to court innit?" (laughter). But then, she looks around to include all of us in that 'cos obviously we're all going to court. I was like speak for yourself, I'm on bail. I'm guessing she's not the judge. Do you know what I mean?

Professor Gary Slapper:

What's funny about this sketch, I think, the heart of it is that it makes it more evident that there is an inherent unfairness in the way that society is carrying on at the moment. The fact that you need a judiciary representative ... the fabric of the society over which it presides is an extremely important point. Until really the last quarter of the 20th century were almost exclusively ... male, upper middle class educated within a very small number of schools and universities and had very similar backgrounds. ... The great part of the 20th century forms a stereotype, a fairly reliable one, of what British judges were like.

Andi Osho:

Chantelle QC. I can't see it myself. Round our way it'd be MC Chantelle QC thank you very much. She'd be there in court going "You getting five years 'cos you mugged that little old lady. Well if you're good then if you're lucky then just maybe... Oi, oi, oi right...you'll be out two years because this system's bad crazy. All rise"

Professor Gary Slapper:

Less than one per cent of the senior judiciary is ... from an ethnic minority background. The Supreme Court of the UK only one of twelve judges is female.

Lady Brenda Hale:

They probably do sometimes do things that you might think are sexist without realising what they're doing, simply because they haven't had enough women around to take them up on it.

Professor Gary Slapper:

Mr Justice Harman once said to a female witness in court objecting to her describing to herself as Ms he said "as far as I'm concerned there are only three types of women: wives, whores or mistress, so which are you?"

Lady Brenda Hale:

I would prefer that we didn't wear wigs.

Lady Brenda Hale: They make everybody look like old men and then everybody is surprised that people think of the judges as old men.

Professor Gary Slapper:

The times they are a changing and now there is a move towards greater recognition of the importance of appointing all people from backgrounds on merit.