

KNOW YOUR ENEMY – KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR

By Rod

This sketch is a modernised version of the Good Samaritan [Luke 10: vv 25-37]. It does not aim to be an exact replication, but there are close parallels. [Vicar = Priest, Nurse = Levite, Hoody Man = Samaritan].

For it to work effectively, the Hoody Man must look suspiciously like a terrorist suicide bomber; thus representing an 'obvious' public enemy – who turns out to be the good neighbour. The vicar and the nurse should remain as peripheral to the action as possible so that they can pass by more 'naturally'; their lines of excuse are thrown away embarrassedly as they scurry away from the situation they do not like.

There is a question mark over whether a mobile 'phone would actually work on the Underground. Perhaps the Hoody Man should pull a communication cord?

The action can be frozen at the end with some uncertainty as to what happens next. There is an intended parallel with the Brazilian man who was accidentally executed by police when mistaken for a terrorist bomber. This is one place where the plot diverts from the parable. More emphasis is thrown on our being unable to identify who our true neighbours are in this sketch. This is brought out further by the fact that the 'enemy' turns out to be the two people who appear to be the most friendly and helpful.

CAST

<i>Station Announcer</i>	<i>Not seen on stage</i>
<i>Hoody Man</i>	<i>Hoody up, baseball cap, swarthy, rucksack, etc</i>
<i>Young Man</i>	<i>Smart casual (carries concealed knife)</i>
<i>Young Woman</i>	<i>Smart casual. Accomplice of young man, but this is not obvious initially</i>
<i>Male Vicar</i>	<i>Dressed appropriately to make this obvious</i>
<i>Female Nurse</i>	<i>Dressed appropriately to make this clear</i>
<i>Police [Could be more than one]</i>	<i>Dark clothing. Blue baseball cap. Padded jacket [to indicate flak jacket</i>

[n.b. All parts could easily be played as members of the opposite sex, but this is what I had in mind as I was writing]

SET

The set is the carriage of an underground train. The idea is that the entrance is from the front. Facing are four seats to the right and four to the left.

A	B	C	D
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E	F	G	H
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ENTRANCE

Announcer This is Brixton.

[Enter Hoody Man who sits in seat C, followed by Young Woman who sits in seat F and Young Man who sits in seat E. The last two must not appear to be 'together']

The train standing at platform one is northbound on the Victoria line. Calling at Stockwell, Vauxhall, Victoria, Green Park, Oxford Circus, Warren Street, Euston, King's Cross, Highbury and Islington, Finsbury Park, Seven Sisters, Tottenham Hale, Blackhorse Road and terminating at Walthamstow Central.

[Enter Vicar, who looks suspiciously at Hoody Man, then moves to sit at seat H. He opens bible and starts to read]

On this train you have plenty of choice.

[Enter Nurse who looks suspiciously at Hoody Man, then sits in seat G. She produces magazine 'Nursing Today' and starts to read]

You can change at Stockwell for the Northern Line, at Victoria for the Circle or District Lines, at Green Park for the Piccadilly or Jubilee Lines, or at Oxford Circus for the Central or Bakerloo Lines. The choice is yours, as long as you know where you are going. The train is leaving, please mind the doors.

[Enter woman hurrying, carrying lots of shopping bags and a handbag. Sound effect of doors closing, train starting and then continuing to move. Actors need to simulate motion of a train. Woman is clearly struggling with her load. She goes towards the empty seats, but notices Hoody Man and decides against it. She looks as though she is simply going to stand in the gap between D and E.]

Young Man *[Rising to feet]* Would you like my seat?

Woman *[Sitting]* Oh, thank you. I'm only going one stop, but it would be nice to sit down for a minute or two. I've been traipsing round the market. My feet are killing me.

Young Man No worries.

Woman *[To Young Woman]* What a polite young man. It's a rarity to see good manners and chivalry these days.

Young Woman How true.

Woman *[Indicating Hoody Man]* I'm not so sure about him though. He looks a bit suspicious if you ask me; what with his hoody hiding his face and that.

Young Woman I see what you mean.

Woman And he's got a rucksack. You don't think he's one of those suicide bombers do you?

Young Woman I suppose he could be.

Woman What should we do?

Young Woman I'm not sure.

Woman Well I'm getting off at the next stop anyway. I'll find a policeman there. They've probably already spotted him on CCTV, but you can't be too careful can you?

Young Woman Good plan.

[Sound of train slowing and stopping. Woman rises to leave]

Woman Well that's me.

Young Man *[Confronting Woman]* OK lady, give us your handbag.

Woman *[Surprised]* What the... Of course I won't. *[Holds handbag away from Young Man. Young Woman rises and grabs handbag. A tussle between the two ensues]*

Young Man *[Producing knife]* I'm warning you. Let go of the bag.

Woman Not on your life. Get off me.

Young Man I warned you.

[Young Man stabs Woman. She releases bag to Young Woman, and grabs hold of knife. Young Man and Young Woman rush off with bag, but leaving knife. Woman falls to her knees. She looks round and catches eye of the Vicar. Meanwhile, Hoody Man produces mobile 'phone and talks into it]

Woman Please help me.

Vicar *[Embarrassed. Closes Bible, rises and hurrying out]* I'm sorry .. er .. er.. I'm er late for evensong.

Woman *[To Nurse}* Please help me.

Nurse *[Rising to leave in a hurry]* I'm sorry. I'm off duty. I'm not allowed to er.. We're not insured you see.

[Woman collapses to floor. Hoody Man moves to her aid. He supports her from behind, propping her up.]

Hoody Man Don't worry, I'll help you.

Woman It's this knife. I've got to pull it out.

Hoody Man No, don't do that. It'll open up the wound and make the bleeding much worse. Wait for the doctors. I've phoned 999.

Woman But I've got to; I can't stand the pain.

[Woman goes as if to start pulling knife out. Hoody Man puts his hands over hers to stop her pulling on the knife]

Hoody Man *[Urgently]* No, don't.

[Enter Police with gun at the ready – ends up pointing at head of Hoody Man]

Police Stop. Armed police. Take your hands away from the weapon or I will shoot.

Hoody Man *[Looking up in surprise]* But... *[All actors on stage freeze]*

THE END