

# WHO IS TO BLAME?

By Rod

*This sketch was first linked with a service dealing with the fact that Jesus took the blame for our sin when He died on the cross for us. It could therefore be linked to verses such as 1 Peter 2 v 24, and 3 v 18. It emphasises the modern trend for blaming anyone else but ourselves, and so failing to take responsibility for our own actions.*

## CAST

*Operator Pushy type. Touting for business. The voice of the 'modern world' – seeking to blame everyone else on Janet's behalf.*

*Janet 'Simple soul'. She has seen the advert for 'Claims Direct' and is wondering whether she has a case.*

*Janet is seated at a desk, as if at work, but makes the call on her mobile. She has a plaster on her finger – the one she would use to open an envelope. The Operator need not necessarily be seen, but could be visible – e.g. in a nearby pulpit – as long as he is clearly away from Janet.*

*Janet taps in a number. The telephone rings. Operator replies.*

Operator Thank you for calling Claims Direct; the company that acts speedily on your behalf to deal with claims relating to accidents at work. We promise you, "No win, no fee". Please note that all our calls are recorded for training purposes. My name is Russell, how may I help you.

Janet Yes, hullo, I've had an accident at work.

Operator May I have your name please?

Janet Er.. Janet Smith. That's Miss Janet Smith.

Operator What is the nature of your employment, Miss Smith?

Jan I'm a filing clerk.

Op I see – that's very dangerous work – and what sort of accident have you had?

Jan I got a paper cut on my finger while opening an envelope.

Op Ooh nasty! There's nothing more painful than a paper cut.

Jan No ... although I suppose a broken leg might be quite painful.

Op True, it's certainly comparable.

Jan And I am told that giving birth to a baby is pretty painful. *[Hastily]*  
Not that I ever have actually given birth, seeing as how I am  
Miss Janet Smith.

Op Ok, Janet .. – do you mind if I call you Janet?

Jan No, I suppose not.

Op I concede that there's nothing more painful than getting a paper  
cut while giving birth to a baby. But, whatever the case, Janet,  
you have suffered a lot and are entitled to compensation.

Jan Am I?

Op Oh yes. Who instructed you to open the envelope?

Jan Well, my boss, I suppose.

Op Did he warn you it was dangerous?

Jan No, not as such.

Op Did he provide you with a letter opener, or any safety clothing?

Jan No, I don't think so.

Op A clear case of negligence. Your boss is for the high jump in the  
claims court.

Jan Is he?

Op Oh yes, and do you recall who sent the letter?

Jan Yes I do; it was from the Inland Revenue.

Op Was there a written warning on the outside of the envelope  
warning you of the dangers of opening it?

Jan No – should there be?

Op Certainly, and the Inland Revenue should be well aware. We  
can sue them for a lot of money. Think of all that tax you've paid,  
we can get some of it back for you.

Jan That'll be nice.

Op May I ask you, Janet, if there are any notices on the walls of  
your office warning you of the dangers of opening envelopes?

Jan No, there are notices, but I don't think they mention letter opening.

Op That's good.

Jan Is it?

Op Yes, it means that we can sue your employer, as well as your immediate boss, and the Inland Revenue.

Jan Oh right.

Op Tell me, Janet, did you lose a lot of blood.

Jan Blood? No.

Op Pity.

Jan I just put a plaster on and that covered up the cut.

Op You mean you put the plaster on yourself?

Jan Yes.

Op So you received no proper qualified medical assistance?

Jan No, it wasn't really necessary ...

Op On the contrary, Janet, it's an absolute disgrace. There's you suffering the most painful injury known to man, and the equal most painful injury known to woman, and no one comes to your aid. You might have bled to death and no one would have even noticed. Your employer has let you down, and is going to have to pay.

Jan Is he?

Op Most certainly. Janet, may I ask if you have ever suffered any other accidents or injuries in your time at work.

Jan I did once burn my tongue on a hot cup of tea. It was my own fault really: I should have waited for it to cool down, only I was gasping because my alarm had not gone off so I had to rush to be at work on time. I've only myself to blame.

Op Janet, you were not to blame.

Jan Well, who was then?

Op            There's the manufacturers of the alarm that failed to wake you up on time, and there's the tea lady who failed to warn you of the dangers of drinking hot drinks to name but two.

Jan            Oh. Will I get a lot of money?

Op            I can't be sure of the exact figure, but there is a good chance that you will never have to work again.

Jan            That'll be nice.

Op            And can I say, Janet, it's the least you deserve for selflessly undertaking such dangerous work. There are not many who have the courage to be filing clerks.

*THE END*