

An Unauthorised Gathering

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Based on the series by Jimmy Perry and David Croft

SCENE 1

Godfrey, Jones, Frazer and Pike are all gathered in the Church Hall ready for parade. Pike is wearing his gas mask and Godfrey is speaking to Jones.

Godfrey: (to Jones) Oh dear, I do hope things simmer down soon, I haven't been able to get to the clinic for ages and my sister Dolly hasn't been able to get any toilet paper for days. I hope things don't get desperate.

Jones: Don't worry about that Godfrey, Joe is seeing to that for us.

Enter Walker carrying a big box.

Walker: Alright any one up for toilet paper, bob a roll.

Platoon gathers around to buy some. Enter Mainwaring and Wilson.

Mainwaring: Walker, what do you think you are doing?

Walker: Um, um I'm giving out note paper, Sir.

Mainwaring: No you're not, you're selling toilet paper aren't you?

Wilson: Really Walker this is too bad.

Mainwaring: I'll do the discipline thank you, Sergeant. Fall the men in Corporal.

Jones: Yes Sir, there is a bit of problem about that. You see we cannot fit everyone in without being two meters apart at the same time.

Mainwaring: I see. That is a problem isn't it, Wilson?

Wilson: Yes Sir. A problem indeed.

Mainwaring: Yes and we must stick to Government advice, come to mention it you're standing a bit close aren't you, Wilson.

Wilson: I'm very sorry Sir, it's so easy to forget.

Mainwaring: You are just going to make sure you don't forget in future.

Jones: Permission to speak, Sir!

Mainwaring: What is it Jones?

Jones: Why don't we open the office door, then we can extend our rank in there.

Mainwaring: Yes very good that's a capital idea, fall the men in.

*Men fall in, **Pike** is in the office.*

Wilson: Attention.

*Jones is late, **Pike** does not respond.*

Wilson: Stand at ease.

*Jones is late, **Pike** does not respond.*

Mainwaring: Pike (*no response*), Pike! (*shouting*).

Jones: Permission to speak, Sir! He can't hear you; he's wearing his gas mask.

***Mainwaring** goes over to **Pike**.*

Mainwaring: Pike!

Pike: (*takes off his gas mask*) Yes?

Mainwaring: Why are you wearing that?

Pike: My mum didn't want me getting Coronavirus, so she said I ought to wear my gas mask.

Mainwaring: It's called a respirator, now take it off.

Pike: Do you think I should? My mum would get awfully cross.

Mainwaring: (*shouting*) Take it off! (*turn to walk away*) Stupid boy.

***Mainwaring** returns to his position next to **Wilson**.*

Mainwaring: Now, we are facing uncertain times, a challenge which is unlike any we have faced before and I am sure we are all feeling the pinch.

Walker: Personally for me business has never looked better.

Mainwaring: I would hardly call black market activity essential.

Walker: What do mean black market? I supply essential supplies.

Mainwaring: Jones, I'm sure your business is struggling somewhat.

Jones: No Sir, there was a queue a mile long outside my shop, it's everybody stockpiling you see.

Frazer: Aye, business is looking up for me too.

Mainwaring: But you are an undertaker.

Frazer: That's what I mean.

Jones: Permission to speak, Sir.

Mainwaring: Go ahead Jones.

Jones: I've just thought of something deadly, do you think this virus could be some sort of biological weapon.

Frazer: Aye, you could be right, Jonesy. You hear that Captain Mainwaring, biological weapon, we're doomed, doomed.

Mainwaring: Oh, I think you're getting into the realms of fantasy now Jones. As you know one of the most important ways of stopping the spreading this virus is washing your hands. So I thought I would gather you hear today to do a hand washing demonstration.

Frazer: Captain Mainwaring, are you suggesting we don't wash our hands.

Jones: I have to be very hygienic as a butcher handling all that meat.

Frazer: Working in your bank, handling that money all day I should imagine you've got the dirtiest hands here.

Wilson: I'm sure Mr. Mainwaring has got lovely hands and washes them all time.

Mainwaring: Thank you, Wilson. Now on command one, we are going to turn on the tap, trickle, trickle. And on command two, we are going to rub the soap in, scrub dub, scrub dub. And on command three, we are going to rinse our hands, rinse rinse, rinse rinse. And finally on command four, we are going to dry our hands, wipe wipe, wipe wipe.

Pike: Sir, is this a public sink or our own one.

Mainwaring: Does it matter, Pike?

Pike: See my mum doesn't like me using public ones; she thinks I will pick something nasty up off the tap or towel.

Mainwaring: (to *Wilson*) You really ought to have a word to his mother about that, she molycoddles that boy far too much.

Wilson: Yes, yes I will Sir.

Frazer: Aye, the boy's right. I have the seen dirty soap at the one in the town.

Walker: Soap isn't dirty. Soap is clean.

Godfrey: My sister Dolly hasn't been able to get any soap for a while; it's in such short supply you know.

Walker: I've got some you can have, two and six a bar.

Godfrey: That sounds quite expensive.

Walker: Well, you said yourself, it's in short supply isn't it.

Frazer: Captain Mainwaring, what's the point in this exercise if soap is in such short supply?

Mainwaring: I think we are straying from the point somewhat. Let's have a go at this then. One.

All: Trickle Trickle (*mime turning on the tap*)

Godfrey: Oh dear. Do you think I could be excused, Sir?

Mainwaring: Certainly not. Two.

All: Scrub dub, scrub dub (*mime using soap*).

Enter Warden, Vicar and Verger.

Warden: Right Napoleon. (*notice everybody miming*) What are you all doing here?

Wilson: That's no concern of yours; as a matter of fact we're pretending to wash our hands.

Warden: (*sarcastically*) What you don't know how?

Mainwaring: (*groaning*) Ignore him men.

Warden: This is an unauthorized gathering above the limited number of people; furthermore, you are not all from the same household, so I am breaking this up.

Vicar: Oh really Captain Mainwaring, if I'm not allowed to conduct my sermons, I don't see why you should be allowed to continue playing soldiers.

Mainwaring: I'm very sorry about your sermons Vicar, but I think you'll find Hodges that the Home Guard are on the list of Key Workers, so if you don't mind we'll continue our demonstration of hand washing.

Verger: If you ask me they are just a load of trouble makers.

Jones: We're not the trouble makers, you're the trouble maker.

Warden: Right I'll be back, and don't think you'll be getting away with this I'll be speaking to the authorities about you.

Warden, Vicar and Verger exit. Mrs. Pike enters.

Mainwaring: So as I was saying.... (*Mrs. Pike butts in*).

Mrs. Pike: Excuse me Mr. Mainwaring, but Frank left his scarf at home. What's he doing without his gasmask on?

Pike: Mr. Mainwaring told me to take it off, mum.

Mrs. Pike: Oh really? I shall have a few words to say to him about that. Now look here Mr. Mainwaring, what's this about you telling my Frank to take his gasmask off.

Mainwaring: It's called a respirator Mrs. Pike, and I really can't have you coming in and interfering with the running of my platoon.

Mrs. Pike: Well, you should run it better then. If my Frank gets the virus it's all your fault, he's all I have you know. Arthur, I want you to keep an eye on him.

Wilson: Yes Mavis I will, why don't you just run along home.

Mrs. Pike: Thank you Arthur, will you be round later for your usual?

Wilson: Yes Mavis. Off you go now.

Mrs. Pike exits.

Mainwaring: Well I'm sorry for all the interruptions men. Hopefully they won't happen again, but before we disband this evening, I'll just like to say that you have all

done very well dealing with this challenge and we must all follow the Government advice to stay at home and stay safe and as far as treating the virus is concerned we'll be ready, won't we Godfrey.

Godfrey: What was that Sir?

Mainwaring: We'll be ready to treat the virus.

Godfrey: Will we.

Mainwaring: Well, you are our Medical Orderly.

Godfrey: Oh yes Sir, I've got some bandages, some bicarbonate of soda and ointment for wasp stings.

Walker: Cor blimey, we're all saved now.

The phone rings

Mainwaring: Answer that, Pike.

Pike answers the phone.

Pike: Yes...it's the colonel for you, Sir.

Mainwaring: I'll take that.

Mainwaring walks over to office door.

Mainwaring: Pike, I can't go into the office while you are still in there.

Pike: Why not Sir?

Mainwaring: Because we'll be less than 2 meters apart then won't we.

Pike: Oh of course sir. I'll just go out of this door here (*pointing at the other office door*).

Pike leaves and Mainwaring enters and picks up the phone.

Pike: (*sticking his head around the door*) You're not going to get the virus through the ear piece, Mr. Mainwaring.

Mainwaring: Go away boy! No, not you Colonel.

Colonel: (*on the other end of the phone*) Hello Mainwaring. There is an unauthorized gathering of people on the beach; I need you and your men to sort it out.

Mainwaring: Yes Sir, right away, you can count on us Sir.

Colonel: We were going send that Warden chap Hodges to go and do it, but we thought it would have more authority coming from you.

Mainwaring: Quite right Sir, the man's a greengrocer.

Colonel: Yes indeed. Well I knew I could count on you, cheerio.

*Phone call ends and **Mainwaring** returns to parade.*

Mainwaring: Right now men pay attention. There is an unauthorised gathering on the beach and we need to go and sort it out.

Jones: Don't panic! Don't panic! Can I fix my bayonet Sir; they don't like it up 'em you know.

Mainwaring: Let's go. And remember men, the only people I want to see out and about will be doing their daily exercise which is running or cycling ...to the beach!

SCENE 2

The Platoon is standing on the promenade and can see three school boys on the beach.

Wilson: Look there they are Sir, three boys sitting on the beach.

Mainwaring: Right men, we need iron discipline, we'll nip this in the bud.

Wilson: Do you think that's wise, Sir?

Mainwaring: What do you mean?

Wilson: Well they are only boys.

Mainwaring: Oh Wilson you live in fairy land, if you let this go who knows where it will end. Frazer, Godfrey and Pike you stay here, the rest of you follow me.

***Mainwaring, Wilson, Jones and Walker** go off to confront the boys.*

Mainwaring: Now look here boys , what do you think you are doing?

Boy 1: We're just sitting on the beach, not hurting anybody.

Wilson: Are you all from the same household?

Mainwaring: I'll ask the questions here, are you all from the same household?

Boy 2: No, he's my next door neighbour.

Mainwaring: (to **Wilson**) I see. This is very serious.

Wilson: Oh really, Sir. I think you are making it out to be much more than it really is.

Boy 1: We better do what the soldiers say.

Boy 3: There not real soldiers. That's Mr. Jones the butcher and old frosty face from the bank.

Walker laughs

Mainwaring: That's enough of that Walker.

Enter Warden

Warden: What do you think you are doing here? This is an ARP matter.

Mainwaring: No it's not, it's a home guard matter, so clear off.

Warden: Don't you tell me to clear off, you clear off.

Colonel joins Pike, Godfrey and Frazer on promenade and calls to men on beach.

Colonel: Mainwaring, what are you doing?

Mainwaring: Hello Colonel. Just sorting out the mis grievance.

Colonel: But Mainwaring, you're standing in a mine field.

Jones: Don't panic! Don't panic! We're standing in a minefield.

Everybody starts to run around to escape the minefield. Godfrey gets out some bandages from his Red Cross bag.

Pike: I think I'll go on my bike and get help.

Frazer: (to **Colonel**) Well, Mainwaring has got his wish, the only people out and about are either running or cycling.

THE END