

Sketches – Walls Of Jericho – myfishbites.com

Intro

The Walls of Jericho and how things could have been different if Health & Safety got involved...

This event can be found in the Bible in Joshua chapter 6.

Walls of Jericho

Stage Directions

The sketch needs three people: two IHSE officers (change names as needed) and Joshua.

The two officers are very 'officious' ("assertive of authority in a domineering way, especially with regard to trivial matters") and obsessed with health and safety law being applied rigidly and correctly. Play the parts relevant to your youth group / church / location etc.

Two people sat in an office at a table each with the tables at right angles to the audience, both facing the same way and with the rear table at an angle so as to see both characters. There is a chair facing both tables but again, angled towards the audience as well.

Both officers have a laptop each. There should be some papers on the desk too – the bigger the stack of papers the better! If possible, both should also have an open briefcase.

Sign behind them saying 'Israeli Health and Safety Executive' (IHSE).

The Sketch

Mr Meaner – Have you been looking over the Jericho files Miss Take?

Miss Take – I have Mr Meaner. I'll be honest, I don't like what I'm reading.

Mr Meaner – Agreed. The whole thing sounds like a disaster in the making.

Miss Take – I've been referencing the proposed scheme with reference to Book HSG150 and have found more health and safety issues than I've ever come across before. Quite honestly, I'm surprised a scheme like this was even dreamed up.

Mr Meaner – I've found that in numerous areas, the law has been ignored. No, strike that, I mean the law has been willfully disregarded. Both the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and the Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) regulations have been ignored. Both of which, in my view, endangers life itself.

Miss Take – The fact that someone who calls himself a leader is responsible for such abhorrent and negligent proposals shows that we must take action promptly and with the appropriate and legally required measures.

Mr Meaner – What kind of man would suggest this course of action? If I were in his position and about to undertake such an undertaking, I'd undertake to do a full and rigorous risk assessment and a full and valid health and safety check beforehand, employing properly qualified persons according to the regulations clearly provided.

Miss Take – Well it's about time for the health & safety interview with Mr Joshua. Have you got the relevant questions we need to ask him? In fact, I don't even think he's gone through planning permission for his proposed proposition, I mean his dangerous demolition.

Mr Meaner – I'll tell you another thing. It's one thing to plan and prepare for the destruction of an object such as a wall. But not only has this not gone through required and rudimentary regulations, it's also the most impractical suggestion for the demolition of a wall that I have heard. And I've heard a few ideas in my time: driving a tank through a wall, kicking it down, blowing it up, getting people to push it down. But this suggestion in front of me is ridiculous. I'm grateful to the member of the public who reported this case to us in the first place.

Miss Take – Without that we would have been clueless. There would have been consequences if this scheme had gone ahead without it being brought to our attention. Serious consequences flow from the flouting of building and demolition laws and regulations.

(Mr Meaner and Miss Take look at each other and simultaneously slam their briefcases shut).

(Knock at the door).

Mr Meaner and Miss Take together – Come in.

(Joshua enters)

Mr Meaner – Ah, Mr Joshua. Please sit down.

(Joshua sits down in the chair facing the officers, making sure the audience can also see his face).

Mr Meaner – Now Mr Joshua, we wish to quiz you on your proposals about bringing down this wall. You do realise your plans have not been legally approved, have not shown due diligence with reference to the regulations and are both a health and a safety hazard.

Miss Take – Not to mention a complete lack of concern about the welfare of children involved in this dangerous proposal.

Joshua – But it's not a proposal.

Miss Take – Exactly. And that is the issue. Mr Joshua you have flouted planning regulations, failed to consult the proper authorities, have shown a complete disregard for paperwork, violated health and safety considerations and what you are proposing is a safety hazard. All in all I'd describe this venture as criminal and we are seriously considering involving the priestly police in this matter.

Joshua – Oh they're involved in the process as well. They're the ones leading.

Mr Meaner – What?! Your scheme is ever more preposterous. You want respectable priests to come with you as you march around some walls. These are dignified men, honourable men, good men. And you're suggesting turning them into some kind of wall watching hikers.

Joshua – Oh they won't be watching the walls. They'll be playing their trumpets and marching.

Miss Take – Brass bands? They're for University campuses in America and for towns in the North of England that once had coal mines aren't they..? This is the Middle East man. What next? Cheerleaders and pom poms...? Display teams?

Joshua – Not a bad idea... Hadn't thought of that... Are either of you interested? I could fix you both up with some cheerleader uniforms if it helps?

Mr Meaner – Mr Joshua, you have gone too far sir. You want to march around the walls of a city, contravening every law, regulation, statutory instrument, planning guidelines and common sense. And you have the audacity to ask us... Us... The two most senior planning leaders to dress up as cheerleaders... How dare you sir.

Joshua – OK then, how about you come as stewards. We need some stewards front and back. You can look after the children if you like.

Miss Take – Unless every 't' is crossed and every 'i' is dotted, you sir, will not be going anywhere. Your procession of mayhem will be cancelled.

Joshua – Can't do that. We start tomorrow. The walk will be going on for a week.

Mr Meaner – A week? What are people to do about eating? Have you even applied to be part of NCASS (the Nationwide Association of Catering)? Have you followed the Due Diligence System or attended an available course?

Food Hygiene Level 1, 2, and 3? Health & Safety? HACCP? Fire Extinguisher course? First Aid course? Sustainability? Starting a Street Food Business? LPG/Gas Safety?

(As each course is read out, Joshua shakes his head).

Miss Take – Oh this gets better and better. Your list of regulatory failures rises ever more. I am going to take personal pleasure in closing you and your scheme down.

Mr Meaner – And what about toilet facilities for the walkers? Have you followed the Purple Guide (Event Health and Safety Guide)? Have you even considered this?

Miss Take – And you're suggesting the priests will be playing trumpets... What about HSE (Health and Safety Executive) rules about noise levels... Will you be keeping audience sound-level exposure to below an event duration maximum of 107 dB, and C-weighted peak sound pressure levels to below 140 dB in accordance with rules? I doubt it...

Joshua – No to both of those questions I'm afraid. Not that it matters.

Mr Meaner – And what do you hope to achieve with all this? Walking around a wall for a week. Fairytale ideas of this wall falling down. What about asbestos levels, hazardous chemicals in the wall? What about having a minimum distance from the wall....? For goodness sake man, do you even own safety hazard tape...?!

Joshua – No. I've got some gaffa tape though. As the saying goes, "If you can't fix it with gaffa tape, you're not using enough gaffa..."

(Silence. The officers are unimpressed. A long cold silence follows).

Miss Take – Have you nothing to say for yourself? You come here with a ridiculous idea, with no health and safety consideration – and want to take the people around a wall and then on the seventh day, shout so that the wall comes down...?

Joshua – Yes ma'am. And we'll be going ahead no matter what you say.

Mr Meaner – We are the ones in charge of health and safety and the regulations. Who do you think you are? On what basis are you doing this man? On whose authority?

Joshua – Honestly, I'm a man. But I'll tell you who I know....

(Stands up and faces the audience and at times also speaks to the planning officers).

I'll tell you who I know... He's the one who built the world. He created man and woman from the dust. He put the minerals and the materials in the ground for us to use. He's the one who started things and will finish things. He's the beginning and the end. What he starts, he finishes. What he says, he does. What he has written will happen exactly as he says. He's the Creator. He knows all things. He is above and beyond all things. He spoke the words that created the cosmos. He's infinite and yet he's interested in man and woman. He's all powerful yet he humbles himself to live with us. He sits in the heavens and yet he walks on the earth. He brings hope where there's hopelessness. He brings life where there is death. He brings help where there is no help. He brings healing to bodies, minds, emotions and the world. He guides and he guards. He starts and he stops. He enable and encourages. He listens and he leads. He comforts those who mourn. He restores the lost. He sets the prisoners free. He loves the lovely and the unlovely. He is always good. He always wants the best. He knows the way we should go and he guides us. He has plans for your now and your future. He makes a way in the desert and brings water to thirsty souls. He brings you through the fire. He is perfect in all of his ways. He is without fault and without sin. He was and is and always will be. One day he'll restore all things. His power is unimaginable and his ways are extraordinary. This is God. Our God. My God.

(Pause).

This is the one who called us to do this. And this is why we'll walk around those walls of Jericho and they will come down. They will come down because my God is able. History is his story. And the only story I want to be part of, the only story worth being part of is his story.

(Speaking to both the officers and the audience).

So will you say yes to him? Is he your God?