

National Hero

A Play for Radio

Characters

Wayne A football supporter

Carol

Wayne's older sister

Reporter

A journalist from a national newspaper

Football commentator

Newsreader

These parts can be read by the same person

Scene 1 A hospital ward in a Paris hospital

Reporter: And your sister has travelled by coach from Manchester to visit you.

Carol: No, it's a place called Burnage, south of Manchester.

Wayne: Say Stockport. Brian and Dave will be listening to this.

Reporter: I'll put Burnage, Stockport for the benefit of our southern readers. Now, your sister tells me this is your first visit abroad, Wayne.

Wayne: Yeah. I've always wanted to watch England play in Europe, show them how real football's played.

Reporter: You don't think much of foreign football then?

Wayne: We invented football, didn't we, so we must be better.

Reporter: Does that mean you came to Paris expecting England to beat France?

Carol: You heard what the nurse said, go easy on him. He was in intensive care all last night.

Reporter: Alright. Wayne, what was your attitude towards the French before the match?

Wayne: We weren't thinking about the French fans. We were just thinking about the game really.

Reporter: Did you consume any alcohol?

Wayne: No . . . well . . . not really . . . a couple of cans of lager.

Reporter: And there was no provocation or animosity?

Wayne: I never said that. I just said we were concentrating on the game. I can't speak for anyone else, just me and the lads.

Reporter: Yet you were stabbed for no apparent reason?

Wayne: But that always happens at these matches. I mean there's always trouble, that's what Dave and Brian said.

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Reporter: So your friends have been involved in football violence before?

Carol: You agreed not to pressure him.

Wayne: It's OK Carol. Listen, they haven't been involved in soccer violence. What I meant was, they've seen it and told me about it.

Reporter: So you decided you'd get your own back and be a national hero.

Carol: My brother isn't a hooligan you know. He was the victim of an unprovoked attack.

Reporter: A dozen serious injuries, windows smashed and cars burnt out. You should see the state your brother's fellow supporters have left Paris in.

Carol: So why did you need to interview Wayne if you knew you were going to blame the English fans? I think that's enough for one day. Why don't you just go and write your usual rubbish about thugs disgracing the name of Britain?

Scene 2 The commentary box at the match

Commentator: And with the match in its eightieth minute the French have had most of the play in the second half . . . the large contingent of England fans have had very little to sing about . . . until now . . . yes Robson is surging forward . . . shoots . . . but the shot brings a magnificent save from the French goalkeeper . . . it's taken upfield . . . to Dupont . . . and the English defence is in all sorts of trouble now . . . French fans are going wild . . . two-nil to France . . . and some scuffles have broken out . . . but they seem to be on the French terraces . . . and it looks as if it's all over for England now.

Scene 3 Wayne's family home in Stockport

Carol: Take it easy now, Wayne. You'll still be feeling weak for a while.

Wayne: No, I feel alright. It's great to be back home. Can I put the radio on?

Carol: You haven't unpacked or had a cup of tea yet. Alright, but at least sit down for a few minutes.

Radio newscaster: In the wake of last week's football violence in Paris, the French government has announced that a claim against Britain for damages to vehicles and shops will be entered through the European Court of Justice. A British government spokesman refused to comment earlier today, but unofficial sources indicate that measures to prevent England football supporters from travelling abroad are being urgently considered. Now on to financial news.

Wayne: That's bad. I didn't get a mention on that one.

Carol: What do you mean?

Wayne: Well, I'm somebody now. I was in the papers and on all those news broadcasts.

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- Carol: You mean you're proud of it?
- Wayne: Why not? It's not every day you get to be famous. I should take some glory for taking on those Frenchies.
- Carol: Are you saying you started all that trouble?
- Wayne: Course we did. It was like that reporter said. We went over to get revenge. We can't have foreigners thinking they're better than us, can we?
- Carol: What about those people your mates injured? What about the shops that were looted, the cars that were smashed up? Don't you feel anything for those innocent people lying in hospital because of you?
- Wayne: What do you mean? I was in hospital myself, remember.
- Carol: You lied to me, you lied to that reporter, to everyone. And now you're whining about your welfare and setting yourself up as a celebrity.
- Wayne: Well I am in a way. I must go and see Brian and Dave. England are playing that Dutch team a week on Saturday, and the lads will be expecting their national hero.