

It is 2.00 am on a summer Saturday morning outside a takeaway somewhere in the heart of Richmond town centre. There is a crowd of people, mostly young, jostling to get hold of some food before the place shuts and also competing for the taxis, some licensed and others not, which are plying for trade close by.

*Edward had stopped off in Richmond much earlier for a couple of halves with a friend on his way home to Barnes from his plush City job; but ended up buying himself a line of coke in the gents at The **** & ***** and never made it back to the station. That was some six hours, eight pints ago. Right now Edward has a dried out mouth, stabbing headache and a ravening appetite. He's just sunk his teeth into the gristly heart of a re-cycled doner kebab and as he moves away from the throng the first couple of greasy mouthfuls slide down his main intestine. Time for a slash, but no time for delay. The street would do fine.*

Edward grips the kebab precariously with his teeth; a puddle is forming on the pavement, when somebody collides sharply with him from behind. He staggers, losing the kebab which gets a thorough soaking, and turns round, shoulders hurriedly hunched to face the alarm or threat.

It's a girl. Probably younger than him, though she's pretty far gone so he can't be sure. Her make up is smudged and someone's messed up her hair. There doesn't seem to be anyone with her and Edward is about to mouth off at her about his kebab when she bends over and vomits in the gutter.

She has no idea where she is, her brain's been pretty much switched off by the half bottle of plonk she downed at home while getting ready, plus the many vodkas which followed during Very Happy Hour.

Being a gentleman from the city, Edward's mind changes gear and his greasy lips crack into a smile; he reaches out and touches the girl's arm.

"Whaddya want?" he asks gallantly. "You wanna get home?"

The girl's mouth continues to gape open like she'd like to puke again. She moves precariously sideways away from his grasp, her red handbag swinging negligently from one arm.

"Where's a taxi?" Her head is tilted back interrogatively as she regards Edward from beneath a loose swatch of hair and for a moment she looks as if she might fall over backwards.

But our hero is on the ball. Right behind her he can see an old saloon car rolling to a halt. The man in a brown leather jacket sitting at the wheel leans out helpfully:

Cont:

“Taxi?”

“There you go” says Edward. But the girl ignores him. With surprising skill she swivels on her boot heel and lunges for the car, intent on bringing her evening to an end. She never makes it.

From the takeaway through a youth suddenly emerges, crop headed in jeans and T-shirt. He too lunges for the vehicle and it is his hand which first grasps the offside rear door handle.

“Mine” he yells, though the word is obliterated by the girl’s shrill yell of anger. Using his grip on the handle as a fulcrum the youth swings his body into hers, barging her away. She retaliates, swinging her red bag towards him. It collides with the driver’s head and he, swearing picturesquely, lets in the clutch and accelerates off.

The youth is not best pleased. He glares at the girl and clenches his fist.

Edward weighs him up quickly. The loss of his kebab stirs aggression in his stomach. The youth is tall but skinny and looks vulnerable. Edward thinks, rightly as it happens, that he’s about 15. He decides to take him on for queue jumping.

“You little Expletive Deleted”, he opines. “That was her ride.”

The youth sees Edward swing his fist towards him but his own reactions have been slowed and blurred. He’s been hanging around the green all evening, drinking and smoking cannabis with a group of friends. The litre of cheap off-license cider, kindly provided by a stranger cajoled into making the purchase, has also taken its toll. His hands are still down by his sides as Edward strikes him hard on the right eyebrow. He staggers backwards, Edward follows through with a blow and the youth collapses.

A lad in the takeaway queue is heard to call the police and as a crowd forms around the youth sprawled on the pavement, Edward decides its time to make a quick exit and jumps in a waiting black cab. As the cab trundles through the town centre, Edward sees the girl from earlier being seen to by Paramedics, she’s finally passed out. Looks like she’ll be getting a free ride to A & E to sleep it off.

Problem solving exercise

- What are the key community safety issues within this scenario and how would you tackle these?

15 minute table top discussion

10 minute feedback

Key Facts

Edward

Age: 22

Occupation: Trainee Stockbroker

Drug habit: Recreational powder cocaine user, uses when ever out in town drinking. Buys at pub/club location where ever he can find a dealer.

Alcohol: Consumed eight pints of lager, three whisky chasers.

Female

Age: 18

Occupation: A-level student; works weekends at supermarket.

Drug habit: None

Alcohol: Binge drinker, only drinks on Friday and Saturday nights. Consumed half a bottle of wine at home, two glasses of wine during happy hour, six vodka and cokes.

Young male

Age: 15

Occupation: GCSE student; works at fathers business on weekends

Drug habit: Smokes cannabis with tobacco daily. Buys both grass and resin cannabis from best friend.

Alcohol: Drinks alcohol at parties and when in groups with peers. Mainly drinks on the weekends and during school holidays. Often attempts to buy alcohol himself but gets turned down as he looks his age. Usually gets a passer by, or older sibling, to purchase alcohol on his behalf. Consumed a 2 litre bottle of cider on the Green.