

## The School Sketch

(or “Motivist and consequent theories compared”)

Scene: Headteacher’s office

Characters:     Headteacher  
                  Millington  
                  Cardew  
                  Norris

**Headteacher**     (brandishing slipper or cane) Right, now first of all, I’m going to get to the bottom of this, and then this is going to get your bottoms. Millington, I understand that you hit young Cardew here in the face.

**Millington**       It was a sort of friendly slap, sir.

**Headteacher**     With a machete?

**Millington**       It slipped. (Headteacher looks quizzical) Well, he kept on calling my sister a smelly tart with big knockers.

**Headteacher**     She is, Millington, what of it?

**Millington**       It was upsetting her, sir. I wanted him to stop saying it.

**Headteacher**     I am sure that you acted from the best of intentions, but I am afraid that it is the *effect* of your action I must punish you for – your motives matter not one jot. And Cardew, I understand that after this, you fired three rounds from a sub-machine gun at Millington?

**Cardew**           Yes, sir.

**Headteacher**     You could have killed him.

**Cardew**           I was trying to, sir. But he ducked.

**Headteacher**     Luckily for Millington. But not so lucky for poor Norris here, standing outside the window, who got it in the head, causing irreversible brain damage.

**Cardew**           (under his breath) Not that you’d notice.

**Headteacher**     Now I know that at the time Norris was trying to set fire to the Deputy Head’s car, and so, though this was hardly a foreseeable consequence, you ensured that the Deputy Head would not have to walk to school by blowing Norris’s brains out. What have you got to say about that?

**Cardew**           It’s an ill wind, sir, that ...

**Headteacher** That's not the point, Cardew. I am afraid that it is the *motive* of your action that I must punish you for – the effects of your action matter not one jot. And finally, Norris. I understand that it was you who *started* all this trouble about Millington's sister.

**Norris** Yes, sir.

**Headteacher** And that you gave a machete to Millington.

**Norris** Yes, sir.

**Headteacher** And that you gave a machine gun to Cardew.

**Norris** Yes, sir.

**Headteacher** And that you were about to set fire to the Deputy Head's car.

**Norris** Yes, sir.

**Headteacher** You realise that it's against the school rules to carry matches?

**Norris** Yes, sir.

**Headteacher** (rhetorical) Is there *anything* that could possibly be said in your favour!

**Norris** Yes, sir. (Headteacher is wide-eyed) I'm a nihilist, sir.

END