

Evil Karate School
A Ten-Minute Comedy
by
John Schoneboom

John Schoneboom
126 Audley Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 1QX
Mobile: 07988 648 784

CAST

MASTER AKUNO: Evil karate master, the older the better

JOHNNY: Karate student. Young adult.

SCENE 1

MASTER AKUNO's karate dojo. Master Akuno is beating up a cuddly toy. He has its arms twisted behind its back firmly in the grasp of one of his powerful hands. With his other hand he punches the toy savagely and repeatedly in the face.

A small silken bag sits on a chair.

AKUNO

No...mercy! No...mercy!

Akuno's student JOHNNY crawls into the dojo, obviously injured badly and breathing heavily. Akuno doesn't notice him at first, so focused is he on the assault of the cuddly toy.

AKUNO (cont'd)

No...mercy! No...mercy!

JOHNNY

Master...

Akuno is startled and embarrassed. He immediately hides the cuddly toy behind his back and turns to face Johnny. He struggles to find something to say, something to distract his student.

AKUNO

Ah! Johnny! Ha! Oh! Look out behind you!

Johnny turns away from Akuno to look, and Akuno tosses the cuddly toy to a far corner of the stage.

Johnny looks back.

JOHNNY

What?

As he speaks, Akuno helps Johnny into a chair and brushes him off.

AKUNO

Just a test! A martial arts test. Well done. So. You have returned alive, meaning the enemy is dead. Of course! The Jizen School is no match for our Akunokan Karate School! And now we rule the martial world!

Johnny hangs his head in shame, totally crestfallen.

JOHNNY

No, Master Akuno.

AKUNO

What?

JOHNNY

I have failed you, master.

AKUNO

You were defeated?

JOHNNY

Fair and square.

AKUNO

Fair and -- yet you are alive. How is this possible, what does it mean?

JOHNNY

Fifi let me live.

AKUNO

Fifi? The enemy's poodle is making these decisions now?

JOHNNY

Fifi is the top student of the Jizen School. She's actually pretty nice. Tough as nails. Canny fighter. Strong moral code. I really admire her.

AKUNO

Just a moment.

Akuno walks over to the cuddly toy, being careful to keep himself between the toy and Johnny's line of vision. With one final glance to establish that Johnny can't quite see what he's doing, he picks up the toy and gives it a few good punches to the face.

While Akuno is occupied, Johnny grabs the small silken bag from the chair and stuffs it into his pocket.

Akuno walks back over to Johnny and gathers himself to speak. He might sigh, for example, or close his eyes and pinch the upper part of his nose right between his eyeballs.

AKUNO (cont'd)

There are a number of issues here.

JOHNNY

I know you're disappointed.

AKUNO

Disappointed? Johnny, haven't I always taught you that honor is everything for people like us?

JOHNNY

Yes.

AKUNO

And haven't I always taught you that schools like the Jizen School want to rule the martial world and destroy the Akunokan?

JOHNNY

Yes. Yes you have.

AKUNO

In other words Johnny, it's an existential struggle, a struggle both for survival and for meaning. Without honor, there is no victory. Without honor, there is nothing.

JOHNNY

I know, but...

AKUNO

Johnny. These fights, like this one with Jizen School, they're not play fights, Johnny. They're not fights to test each other, to admire each other, to make friends with each other. They're fights to the death, Johnny.

JOHNNY

I know, but...

AKUNO

There are no buts in fights to the death! You go, you kill, or you die!

JOHNNY

But master, I was ready to die! I lost the fight, I said to myself hey, this is it, she's going to kill me, here we go. And then she didn't! She just grabbed my nose and said "honk".

AKUNO

You should have kept fighting until she was forced to kill you!

JOHNNY

I had nothing left. I couldn't even stand. They offered me water, food, and medical treatment. I refused.

AKUNO

But Johnny, didn't you use the traditional Akunokan fighting secrets? The poisoned microdarts? The blinding powder? The hidden blade?

JOHNNY

No! Only a fair fight can defend the honor of the Akunokan!

AKUNO

Did I teach you that?

JOHNNY

Well, no. Fifi said it. I thought it seemed reasonable.

Akunokan clenches his fists and looks in the direction of the cuddly toy. He clearly wants to pummel it but he is restraining himself.

AKUNO

This Fifi has mocked and humiliated you.

JOHNNY

What, by letting me live?

AKUNO

Yes, by letting you live. This is a grave insult to your honor.

JOHNNY

I thought it was quite decent of her.

AKUNO

No no, that's a misconception.

JOHNNY

I don't know, I think it shows a certain generosity of spirit, a sort of transcendence if you will, a...

AKUNO

Silence! You're wrong. It's an insult. A grievous insult. There is only one way forward from here. One way to restore the honor of the Akunokan.

JOHNNY

You're not going to go and kill Fifi!?

AKUNO

Of course not. That would be beneath my dignity.

JOHNNY

Good, exactly, beneath your...

AKUNO

I'm going to have to kill you myself.

There is a long pause as the two karate men look at each other and nod. Johnny wags his index finger at Master Akuno like he's thinking up how to respond.

JOHNNY

That is so old skool, and I do love that, but hear me out...

AKUNO

It's the only way. You should have died in the fight, now you're humiliated, no, it's intolerable. You can't live with this. I can't live with this. It's the only way.

Akuno slowly begins to approach Johnny menacingly. Johnny stands up and backs away.

JOHNNY

It's not like I don't appreciate the thought. I'm touched that you would do that for me, killing your own beloved student like that, that is deep, but I can't let you do it.

AKUNO

I don't think you can stop me.

The men slowly circle each other, as Akuno loosens up his shoulders and hands in preparation for the attack.

JOHNNY

No, the guilt would eat you alive, you'd regret it. Me, I'd be sitting pretty, all nice and dead with no worries and my honor restored, it's a good deal for me, sure, but you, you know, as leader of the school, people might talk, it wouldn't end there. As a matter of fact I can think of a better way, for you I mean, and this is just me going very zen here, losing my ego completely, absolutely selfless, but you could just commit suicide.

Akuno stops in his tracks. Johnny does likewise, holding out his hands and smiling as if to say hey, you have to admit, good idea right?

AKUNO

Seppuku? Ritual suicide? Me?

JOHNNY

Sure! I mean, talk about honor! You take the long dagger, disembowel yourself, and if you take too long to die and the pain is unbearable, you've got me, your devoted student standing by with a long sword to cut your head off.

AKUNO

No, no no no no.

JOHNNY

Why not? That's the smart move, master, a suicide like that covers the honor of the whole Akuno school, nobody's going to argue with that. And I stick around to make sure your legend is recorded properly in the history books.

AKUNO

No no, if only it were that simple, Johnny. If only! There are very clear customs around these things, very rigid customs, we can't just play fast and loose like that. No, unfortunately, you're the one with the dishonor, and you're the one who has to die.

Akuno resumes his slow advance on Johnny, who resumes his slow retreat.

JOHNNY

Honor. Ha! What would you even know about it?

AKUNO

How dare you!

JOHNNY

Fifi was right about you! About this whole school!

AKUNO

Keep talking, kid, you're making this whole thing a lot more enjoyable.

JOHNNY

She says you're evil! She says the whole school is!

AKUNO

What, my school? The Akunokan?

JOHNNY

Yeah.

Akuno stops his pursuit once again to throw up his hands in disbelief.

AKUNO

Ha! Akuno, evil? You shouldn't be taken in so easily. It's quite obvious that Fifi is the evil one, using lies to confuse you. Isn't that exactly what you'd expect an evil martial arts overlord to do?

JOHNNY

She's a college student.

AKUNO

Studying business, no doubt. All the better to dominate the martial world!

JOHNNY

She's a fine arts major. She says you're the only one trying to dominate anything.

Akuno drops into a chair, exasperated.

AKUNO

Johnny, Johnny, Johnny. Honestly. You can't believe artists these days, they're all postmodernists. They'll throw anything up there along with some self-involved narrative about how narratives can't be trusted. Deconstruct it long enough and you'll find there's nothing there at all, I assure you.

JOHNNY

That may be. But still, she really made me think. I started karate because I wanted to bring my mind and body together to polish my spirit. Not bust into other schools and throw blinding powder into people's eyes when they say hello and then beat them up!

AKUNO

Well. They asked for it.

JOHNNY

How?

AKUNO

They were plotting against us.

JOHNNY

Yeah? How do you know that?

AKUNO

That...is a secret.

JOHNNY

Oh great. Isn't that convenient?

AKUNO

Sources and methods, need to know basis, security is no joke in the martial world Johnny. Trust me. These were preemptive attacks against very, very evil outsider karate schools.

JOHNNY

They didn't seem very evil. They called the police.

AKUNO

Of course. The cops are in on it too.

JOHNNY

Then there's the financial fraud. Fifi says the reason all your students left is because you stole loads of money out of their accounts.

AKUNO

The cops, the banks, they're all in on it.

JOHNNY

She said you burned your last dojo down for the insurance money.

AKUNO

The cops, the banks, the fire department...it's a vast, evil network, Johnny. This is what I'm up against here.

JOHNNY

That and cuddly toys, apparently.

AKUNO

What? No, I never! I don't know what you're talking about! My mother never stole my cuddly toys when I was little! You saw nothing! Mommy loves me! Mommy loves me!

This is a good place for a fairly long pause.

JOHNNY

OK. Let's move on. You told me Jizen School meant School for Martial Domination. Well I asked Fifi. She showed me her Japanese-English dictionary.

AKUNO

What now, here we go.

JOHNNY

It means benevolence, Master Akuno. Jizen means kindness, benevolence, good will.

AKUNO

Sure, I'd want to fool people too if I ran a school for world domination.

JOHNNY

So then I looked up Akuno just for kicks.

AKUNO

Well, it has many definitions, Johnny, many connotations, a lot of subtleties, if you're not a native Japanese speaker you probably...

JOHNNY

It means evil. Akunokan is the house of evil.

AKUNO

That's really oversimplifying.

JOHNNY

We're an evil karate school. Admit it.

AKUNO

That's a very cartoonish word, Johnny.

JOHNNY

Admit it.

AKUNO

Evil for whom, in what culture, compared to what?

JOHNNY

I can't believe it took me so long to realize I signed up for evil karate lessons. So many things make so much more sense now.

AKUNO

I'm sure this is all very fascinating Johnny but the fact remains you dishonorably survived a fight to the death and now it's up to me to finish you off. En garde.

JOHNNY

So be it.

The men square off in fighting stances.

Akuno reaches into his pockets, looking for something he can't find. He taps all around his waist looking for it.

Johnny reaches into his own pocket and produces the small silken bag.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

Looking for this?

AKUNO

My blinding powder! You little thief. And I'm supposed to be the evil one!

JOHNNY

Just a precaution. I will however be using the Secret Karate Death Touch technique.

AKUNO

Ah, the Secret Karate Death Touch technique.

JOHNNY

Yes, the Secret Karate Death Touch technique.

AKUNO

Which is of course the special secret touch that results in the recipient's death perhaps not immediately but within some time span of not more than several days or so.

JOHNNY

That's the one.

AKUNO

All right then. I'll use it too. Let's see whose secret touch secretly touches somebody first.

After some circling and swiping, Johnny finally gets a claw-fingered hand onto Master Akuno's pectoral as both men make sounds from some generic Saturday morning kung fu movie.

Akuno staggers backwards and drops into his chair.

JOHNNY

You're a dead man.

AKUNO

My god, you're right. Is there blood coming out of my mouth? That's a sure sign of being a dead man in a martial arts fight.

JOHNNY

No. Not yet.

AKUNO

Well, I'm probably a dead man anyway. That is, I would be, if...

Akuno springs out of his chair and laughs.

AKUNO (cont'd)

...the Secret Death Touch Technique were actually real! Which it isn't! Ha ha!

JOHNNY

But you said it worked if you really believed in it!

AKUNO

Did I? Awww. And did you really really believe, Johnny?
Did you?

JOHNNY

Yes.

AKUNO

Awww, that's so...

Akuno grabs at his chest and drops back into his chair. Dead.

Johnny walks over to him and checks his wrist for a pulse. Nothing. Akuno is dead.

JOHNNY

Whoa. Weird feeling. Leadership vacuum! I may have been underestimating the power of the dark side of the force here.

Johnny retrieves the cuddly toy. He holds it up and looks at it like it smells bad.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

(to the cuddly toy)

You are actually quite an unlikeable toy.

He holds up the toy with one hand, and winds his other arm back with his hand in Secret Karate Death Touch position.

Lights out.

Curtain.