**The Good Priest**by Dave Carley
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**The Good Priest
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**Cast:**

Francis – A Catholic Priest, 30s-40s
Albert – A young man from Uganda

**Location:**

The church rectory.

**Synopsis:**

Francis – a Catholic priest – has been attacked on the steps of his church by a group of drunks. A young man from his parish - a church-sponsored refugee from Uganda – visits him and helps bathe his wounds. Albert has also escaped from violence – the homophobia in Uganda unleashed by recent anti-Gay legislation in that country. Father Francis is planning a demonstration against the American evangelists who influenced passage of that bill. He now has to do it with a bruised face – but he hopes to have Albert at his side.

**Background note:**

Previously known as the“Kill the Gays Bill”,the Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Act was signed into law on February 24, 2014, by Uganda’s president, Yoweri Museveni. Clauses prescribing the death penalty in certain instances were dropped from the bill but the Act still broadly criminalizes same-sex acts, and conviction for homosexual acts can result in a life sentence. It also makes it a crime not to report gay people. It is widely believed that the private members bill that lead to the Act was incited by the involvement of three American evangelical Christians. Since the Act’s passage, homophobic incidents in Uganda have risen dramatically.

**Dave Carley:**

Dave Carley’s plays have had over 450 productions across Canada and the United States and in many countries around the world. They include *Writing with our Feet*; *Taking Liberties*; *Conservatives in Love;* and an adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s *The Edible* *Woman*. A new drama about the death penalty, *Twelve Hours*, recently premiered in Columbus, Ohio. It was hailed by the Columbus Dispatch, which said, “*Twelve Hours* packs a lot of humanity into 90 minutes of gripping theatre.” For more, visit [www.davecarley.com](http://www.davecarley.com)

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**1.**

*FRANCIS is dressed in his civvies. ALBERT is dressed for the bars.*

*As lights come up, FRANCIS is looking in the mirror, trying to clean a face abrasion. The side of his face is bruised and cut. There’s a knock on his door. He checks the keyhole, and opens it.*

**ALBERT:** *(Entering.)* I’m just on my way to the bowels of sin and saw your light on – what happened!?

**FRANCIS:** Just a scrape.

**ALBERT:** More than that!

**FRANCIS:** It looks worse than it is.

**ALBERT:** How’d you get it!?

**FRANCIS:** The gravel by the church steps.

**ALBERT:** You fell?

**FRANCIS:** I wish. *(Goes back to cleaning his wound.)* I heard some noise and went outside to look; a guy was taking a leak on the steps.

**ALBERT:** The church steps!?

**FRANCIS:** It’s not the first time. They come out of that sports bar on the corner/

**ALBERT:** That is so disrespectful!

**FRANCIS:** I told him to stop, he swore at me, the next thing I knew I was on the ground.

**ALBERT:** He hit you!?

**FRANCIS:** One of his buddies decked me from behind.

**ALBERT:** Were you knocked out?

**FRANCIS:** For a moment. By the time I’d stood up they’d swaggered off.

**ALBERT:** Maybe they didn’t know you were a priest.

**FRANCIS:** They knew.

**ALBERT:** You need to disinfect this with more than water/

**FRANCIS:** It’s just gravel/

**ALBERT:** Here, let me. It’s going to bruise.

**FRANCIS:** Yes.

**ALBERT:** You’re going to set a lot of tongues wagging at mass. “And how did Father Francis get that bruise?”

 *(ALBERT works on him a bit. It’s tender.)*

**FRANCIS:** Are you heading off somewhere need I ask?

**ALBERT:** Not now I’m not.

**FRANCIS:** Albert.

**ALBERT:** Maybe a bar.

**FRANCIS:** Yes, you’ve got that look.

**ALBERT:** I’m sure I don’t know what you mean, Father.

**FRANCIS:** In the three months since you’ve been here, I’ve learned to recognize your work clothes, your mass clothes, and your paint the town red clothes. Each more colourful than the last. And after the bar?

**ALBERT:** How could anyone hit a priest?

**FRANCIS:** Don’t change the subject.

**ALBERT:** But it’s crazy/

**FRANCIS:** Is it really so incomprehensible?

**ALBERT:** Yes!

**FRANCIS:** We don’t live in a society anymore where respect is automatic. *Dis*respect is. You sure you want to live here?

**ALBERT:** We didn’t call this disrespect. There were other words. And in Kampala they wouldn’t have run off until they’d finished the job. I will stay here with you tonight.

**FRANCIS:** I’m fine.

**ALBERT:** You had a concussion!

**FRANCIS:** Albert, I’m fine.

*(A bit more cleaning or bandaging of the wound.)*

You can tell me if you’re going to the bathhouse. Don’t hide things from me. But you have to be careful. This may not be Kampala, but those guys, if they’d come across you and not me – I worry you think this is some kind of paradise and nothing bad happens here and you’re going to walk home wearing that. It’s kind of lively.

**ALBERT:** Lively?

**FRANCIS:** That’s called a ‘euphemism’. That’s lively. Even by your – lively – standards. Keep your guard up.

**ALBERT:** Yes Father.

**FRANCIS:** Don’t you ‘Yes Father’ me.

**ALBERT:** Yes Father.

**FRANCIS:** And about Tomorrow –

**ALBERT:** I haven’t decided.

**FRANCIS:** I understand you’re not comfortable demonstrating/

**ALBERT:** I don’t want to let you down but/

**FRANCIS:** If you want to add your voice, then come. A few words from you, from someone who actually suffered from the crap they’ve been pushing/

**ALBERT:** I know.

**FRANCIS:** I’m being unfair. It’s a lot to ask. You had North Americans screwing you over in Uganda, we sponsor you to come here and now I’m asking you to get in the middle of us fighting among ourselves. But it kills me that the hatred that sent you packing from there actually started over here, in this city, down the street. All in the name of God. The least I can do is organize people here against them -

**ALBERT:** But it’s funny, isn’t it. The way I am living here is exactly the way they didn’t want me living – there.

**FRANCIS:** They’ve lost the culture wars here, so now they’re exporting it overseas. But what was hate here, is hate there. Except that you ended up with the Kill the Gays bill. That’s why we have to witness against them. Tomorrow, before their service. On the steps of their church. We’re going to piss on *their* steps. Metaphorically.

**ALBERT:** I will consider attending.

**FRANCIS:** You’ll ponder this while you’re at the tubs?

**ALBERT:** I do some of my best thinking there.

**FRANCIS:** Speaking of which.

 *(PRIEST goes and gets condoms.)*

**ALBERT:** You have condoms!

**FRANCIS:** Not for me! People come to me for counselling -

**ALBERT:** I’m not using priest condoms! Talk about killing the mood. ‘Excuse me while I slip on my priest’s rubber’.

**FRANCIS:** *(Handing him some lube.)* And lubricant.

**ALBERT:** I’m reporting you to the Bishop. I’ll tell him when I see him at the tubs.

 *(They laugh, though FRANCIS is not entirely sure ALBERT is joking.)*

Will you understand if I don’t go to the demonstration?

**FRANCIS:** Of course.

 *(Another pause.)*

**ALBERT:**Father Francis.

**FRANCIS:** When you say ‘Father Francis’ I know it’s serious.

**ALBERT:** You only hand these out? You don’t ever -

**FRANCIS:** I’ve told you. I’m not gay.

**ALBERT:** Not even a little bit?

**FRANCIS:** And I don’t want women either.

**ALBERT:** Do you know what they call you at church?

**FRANCIS:** I know you’re about to tell me.

**ALBERT:** Father Waddawaste. I’m checking in on you later.

**FRANCIS:** Sure. If the light’s on - You can help me paint signs for tomorrow. *(Hands over money.)* Take a taxi home.

**ALBERT:** It’s only eight blocks!

**FRANCIS:** I don’t care.

*(ALBERT is leaving.)*

 You were joking about the Bishop, right.

**ALBERT:** I didn’t know who he was at the time.

**FRANCIS:** Bishop Martin was really at the baths!?

**ALBERT:** My lips are sealed. But, Father - who cares? We’re all the same in a towel.

**FRANCIS:** Yes, Albert. We truly are. Now go, and for God’s sakes, be safe.

**The End.**