

TRIPTYCH

Characters (3): Uncle Sam, Victor, Mrs. Krahn (Victor's Mother)

(The character playing Uncle Sam stands in a frame representing an oversized "I Want YOU!" poster. He is frozen as part of the poster. He comes to life over the course of the beginning of the skit and steps out of the "poster" to interact with Victor in the scene).

Victor: *(Looks at Uncle Sam poster)* Wow! These posters are everywhere! *(finds the letter in his mailbox and reads the letter)* Greetings, having submitted yourself to a local board composed of your neighbors for the purpose of determining your availability for training and service in the armed forces of the United States of America. You are hereby notified that you have been selected for training in the "infantry." Where am I going?

Uncle Sam: Well, you could be sent that way to the Pacific. *(Sam points that direction)*

Victor: Did somebody say something? *(looks away)*

Uncle Sam: Or they could send you that way, to Europe *(points the other direction).*

Victor: Hey wasn't he pointing the other direction?

Uncle Sam; Of course, some people do end up going both ways!

Victor: Hey! You did say something! Who are you?

Uncle Sam (steps out of the poster): I'm what you would call the American Dream; the glue that holds this beautiful nation of ours together. Otherwise known as good ol' Uncle Sam and I want you to help defend the great red, white, and blue stripes and stars. I WANT YOU!

Victor: What does this have to do with me?

Uncle Sam: Do you love your country?

Victor: Yes!

Uncle Sam: Do you value your freedom?

Victor: Yes!

Uncle Sam: Do you want the women and all of the little helpless babies to suffer because you didn't heed your country's call?

Victor: Yes! ... I mean no!

Uncle Sam: Well then, I got news for you, boy! This war has everything to do with you *(pause)* your mamma, your papa, your sister, your brother, your other sister, your cousin, your second cousin, that girl who sits behind you on the bus, the girl that sits behind her on the bus --

Victor: Okay, I get it, I get it.

Uncle Sam: I don't think you do. Your country needs you son. If you don't serve who will? Your father? Your grandfather? No son. It's up to you and your generation to defend what our nation is known for; our American values and freedoms. I want -- no need -- you to serve the United States of America. Can you do it?

Victor: Yeah!

Uncle Sam: I can't hear you!

Victor: YEAH!

Uncle Sam: Then go get them, soldier!!!!!!!

Victor: YEAH!

(Victor runs offstage. A number of things could be done theatrically over the course of the following monologue. Some possibilities are tableaux with Victor in different motions. Victor's mother could be in some of these. Alternatively, there could just be a clear stage with only Uncle Sam speaking. Director's discretion and interpretation.)

Uncle Sam: Let's see how our soldier's story is shaping up (opens book) After being the first person from his hometown to be drafted into the Second World War, our brave young soldier heads out for duty from a crowded train station full of supporters in Plymouth Wisconsin. There are so many people, the train can barely move through. By the end of basic training, our soldier has become strong and skilled. Now loyalty and dedication flow through him. He has gained the respect of all of his comrades. He knows with the attack on Pearl Harbor that he is in this for good. He travels by train to San Francisco, spends 32 days sailing across the ocean to Australia, and then travels to New Guinea! And now our brave young soldier is facing battle as the U.S. fights for Leyte and the Pacific Islands! How heroic! Truly American! Let's go check on our young soldier! (He exits. A few moments later he enters with a somber look on his face. He is trying to stay positive, but it is clear that he is struggling emotionally) Well...small oversight. Our soldier thought he showed that sniper behind the tree a thing or two. Missed a few grenade throws, slipping on the mud in the rainy jungle. But he shot that sniper's bayonet right off! Hah! Amazing! What a show! Truly American! (It is harder and harder to hide his true emotions) But then...then.....the sniper's next bullet...somehow found its way under Victor's helmet...between his helmet and his head...Sliced along the silhouette of his head and cut down the back of his neck, causing him to lose consciousness. (Making one last effort at sounding positive) But what bravery! Amazing! An American hero! What bravery...Truly American!.....what bravery. (Gives up. Sits down with his head in his hands sadly. Pulls out a pen and paper). His condition is currently unknown. And this letter won't get to his family for nearly three months.

(Uncle Sam prepares the letter. Victor's Mother, Mrs. Mabel Krahn, enters. They make eye contact. Uncle Sam hands her the letter and she opens it. She pauses as she reads the letter, then falls on her knees as she reads. Uncle Sam moves forward to comfort her. The song "Triptych" cuts in, sung by VOX performance group.)

-Tableaux of moments between Uncle Sam and Mrs. Krahn (as if it was a series of still shots).

-Tableaux of Victor arriving home from war, between him and his mother. 1. Mother could be looking away and Victor entering the door behind 2) She turns 3).They hug 4) She cries. Or something of that sort. These still shots can be used in the visual component of the movie after the song is done to indicate that Victor did indeed survive

(FYI that Victor did in fact survive and received a purple heart. He lived to be 99 years old).