

## Gone but not forgotten

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**W**here did Mr. B. go? I've been watching him watch me for the last 4 hours and now that it's finally his turn to be seen he's gone. The least these people could do is tell someone before they leave.

*But I waited for 8 hours and you never came to see me.*

First of all — you only waited 7 hours. Don't exaggerate. Second — I was busy seeing other patients. I was saving lives!

*Yeah, right! I could see you from where I was sitting — joking with the nurses, eating that sandwich ...*

What! How dare you! How would you like it if I came to your office and stared at you while you did your job? Are you saying that I shouldn't eat — that I can't have a normal conversation with a nurse? Do I need to ask your permission to take a pee? I was working for 5 hours without a break before I grabbed that sandwich.

*I sat for 8 hours and nobody fed me! Anyway, I was feeling better and I wanted to go home.*

But I don't know that — all I have is your chart. The triage note is bad. It says your headache started suddenly — you could have a leaking aneurysm for all I know.

*But I feel better!*

Listen — let me be the judge of that. And the least you could have done is told someone before you left.

*Excuse me?! You've got some nerve making me wait for 8 hours, sitting me next to the moaning woman with the "life-threatening" toe injury and the homeless guy who hasn't bathed in a month and then getting mad at me when I leave.*

But you came here for help. You had a chart made, the nurse talked to you — we have a "relationship." I care what happens to you.

*Isn't that sweet! You don't care about me — you care about getting sued. You're just trying to cover your own backside.*

You know — I'm really trying here. I'm working as hard as I can. I saw 20 sick patients this morning and the waiting room is fuller than when I started.

*Well maybe you need some help. Maybe you should hire some more doctors or something.*

Are you saying that I can't handle the load? That I'm not fast enough? You know the real problem is people like you — people who run to the emergency for every little thing. The second you have a twinge or a pain or an ache you're sitting in front of my triage nurse telling your sob story.

*What! You just said that I might have a leaking blood vessel in my brain — how long am I supposed to wait before I get that checked out? And anyway — I was feeling better! That's why I left. I wanted to go home. I didn't want to waste any more of your time or mine.*

Yeah — but now all I have is this stupid chart, and this stupid triage note, and I have no idea whether you're out drinking with your buddies or lying face down in your apartment with a head full of blood. I could call the phone number on the chart, but what would I say — "How ya doin'? Was it fun waiting for 8 hours? Why don't you come back and wait some more?" You know if you had just said something to someone before you left it would have really helped — it would have given me some closure.

*Wait a minute — let me get this straight. I come to the emergency department because I think I have a brain tumour or something — then I sit and watch while every other schmuck and their grandmother goes in before me, and then I get moved into a bed and see all of you guys wandering around doing whatever it is you do — it certainly wasn't paying any attention to me — and then I feel better and go home, and you want me to feel sorry for you because you don't have closure? Get over it!*

Yeah, well thanks for nothing!

*Well, thank YOU for nothing!*

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