

Gone but not forgotten

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Where 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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