

# GETTING ON

A Docu-Comedy

Episode #101

"Born on the Fourth of July"

adapted by

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FIRST DRAFT

Nov. 21, 2011



#### A NOTE ON STYLE:

The following material will be shot with a moving, fluid, run-and-gun camera that is never locked down, that "grabs" coverage instead of dutifully capturing canned and static blocking. "Wheelchair Cams" as opposed to "tracks", coupled with interesting and purposeful internal jumps and time-cuts. It both facilitates shooting time and increases spontaneity in the execution.

Also, an emphasis will be placed on faces and reactions, and performances directed to discover unguarded and unscripted moments. This "docu-comedy" style, intelligently rendered, takes material that might otherwise be earnest or melodramatic or broad or precious, and grounds it. It allows the dark, deadpan humor to emerge and performance to command attention and punch through. It's a unique style (not "shaky handheld" or self-conscious "mockumentary"), that was one of the most winning aspects of the original format.

#### BALL-PARK MAIN TITLES:

Modern, automated doors whisk open as we enter Mount Palm Medical Center: gleaming floors, attractive "white-coats", happy families, cheerful Mylar balloons. Down a hall, through double doors, following a red-line on the floor, through a tunnel, up an elevator and into the world of extended care: workers and patients "less spiffy", uniforms less crisp. Wheelchairs, aging women in walkers; older equipment. And our three lovely, middle-aged ladies at the desk: "Getting On".

GETTING ON #101 - "Born on the 4th of July" - HBO Draft 1.

INT. BILLY BARNES EXTENDED CARE FACILITY - LILIAN'S ROOM- DAY

TILTING up from an age-spotted, wrinkled hand with an IV bandage... to an Elderly Woman's sleeping face (LILIAN)...

PANNING over to her other hand, clasped tightly by a much younger hand... A MURMUR of SOFT LAUGHTER...

ANGLE: Charge Nurse DAWN FORCHETTE, 40s, in a navy blue uniform, sits bed-side: "the hand clasper." Dawn's free hand texts on a iPhone. She GIGGLES, sex-kittenish.

ANGLE: on the bedside table, an elaborately iced, home-made cake that reads: "Happy 87th Birthday Lilian"... A RASPY, FINAL EXHALATION OF BREATH...

Dawn continues texting, then stops, glances at Lilian... she realizes Lilian's dead. She takes her pulse, checks her breathing. She puts her phone away, notes the time, jots it on a clipboard, removes the pillow from beneath Lillian's head. She puts drops of Visene into Lilian's eyes as--

MARTA ORTLEY, 60s, a Practical Nurse, opens the curtain:

MARTA

There's a turd on a chair in the hall.

DAWN

Excuse me?

MARTA

Someone shit on a chair.

DAWN

It's "feces". It's not "shit", it's not "a turd", it's feces.

MARTA

There's feces on a chair.

DAWN

Okay. I'm coming. Show me where.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - NURSE'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Marta and Dawn approach a common hall area. We glimpse adjacent "quads", filled with beds of Elderly Women, many of them dazed, with evident dementia.

Dawn looks down at the soiled chair (the offending "feces" ever O.C.). A crisp, wilting woman, BIRDY, 80s, with a sweatshirt over her pink hospital gown, sits in a near chair.

DAWN

Did you meet Birdy?

MARTA

I don't think so.

DAWN

Birdy, this is Marta. This is her first day with us. Marta's from Las Vegas.

BIRDY

(stone deaf; shouting)

Oooh! Las Vegas! Pleased to meet you, Honey.

DAWN

Birdy's been with us a for awhile. She used to be in the industry. Birdy worked in public relations at CBS.

MARTA

It's very nice to meet you.

DAWN

Did you have a B.M., Birdy? Birdy, did you have a bowel movement?

BIRDY

When?

DAWN

The last fifteen minutes or so. In the chair?

BIRDY

I don't think so, Honey.

DAWN

Did you see anyone who did? Who maybe did have a B.M. in the chair?

BIRDY

No.

MARTA

I'll clean it up--

DAWN

Oh God, no, it's not that simple. You have to fill out an Incident Report.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - NURSE'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The chaotic Nurse's Station: files and papers everywhere, meager red, white and blue 4th of July decorations. Dawn is on the phone; Marta tentatively fills out an Incident report.

DAWN

Hi, it's Dawn Forchette in Extended Care--

(JUMP:)

Well when CAN they come? Because I-- they should probably take the whole chair-- So if it could be more like-- an hour? No, forget about it, then. It can't wait that long. We'll just red bag it. No, just forget I even called.

JUMP: Dawn on another call:

DAWN (CONT'D)

Yes, I'd like to speak with Mrs. Sandy Saks. Yes, it is-- it's about her sister Lilian-- No, I have to talk to her in person. Tell her to call me, okay? Nurse Dawn Forchette. Yes. She knows who I am. Okay. Thanks.

She hangs up. Sighs. Marta shows her the form:

MARTA

Is this good enough?

DAWN

"Found a feces on a chair." No. Incident Reports have to be really, really specific.

MARTA

Like what else?

DAWN

Well first of all it's just feces. Not "a" feces.

MARTA

There was just one.

DAWN

But there's no singular form for feces. And you need to put what time of day it is, the exact time. You need to say what the incident was-- that someone deposited feces on a chair--

MARTA

Well that's more or less what I wrote.

DAWN

Yeah, but who found it? When did they find it?

MARTA

I found it. It's my name, okay?

DAWN

Right. Marta Ortley. Okay. But. Technically, because it's a potential agent of infection, Environmental Services should come to collect it, but we can't wait, so we'll red bag it, which is what we do with all clinical waste--

MARTA

Twelve years ago we'd just pick it up with a Kleenex and toss it in a toilet.

DAWN

Yeah, well, twelve years ago they barely knew about C. diff.

MARTA

I barely know about it now.

DAWN

Believe me, you will--

(re: the form)

You need to make a copy for the floor report, and one for Beverly-- she's the "infections provost." And as long as we're here-- These are your Start of Therapy OMRAs, these are your End of Therapy OMRAs-- they can be combined with a PPS assessment, but they can't replace it--

(JUMP:)

--if the answer is yes, then an End of Therapy OMRA is required. If it's no, the Part A Stay and Benefit both stop--

(JUMP)

The original goes to Hospice, these two you keep for your files--

(JUMP:)

The electronic signature system isn't up and running, so hard copies have to be kept here--

Marta, bewildered, as DR. JENNA JAMES, 40s to 50s, enters and approaches the Front Desk of the long, narrow station.

JENNA

I'm so glad SOMEONE enjoys working on a national holiday. I'm completely over it. Which bed is she in?

MARTA

The dead one?

JENNA

The "deceased party", yes.

DAWN

Quad Three.

(off James' clueless look)

The second quad on the right.

Marta looks to Dawn: who's this? Dr. James goes to check.

DAWN (CONT'D)

(avoids the look)

Did we go over skin assessments? It's really important you fill out this skin assessment on any new patients...

Marta nods, dazed and confused...

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - QUAD THREE - SAME TIME

ANGLE: Three Very Elderly Female Patients in the other beds, one compos mentis, the other two... not, staring at Dr. James as she puts her stethoscope to Lillian's chest...

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - NURSE'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. James returns.

JENNA

Yes, she is deceased. So could you get me a death certificate. Please.

Dawn goes for the form, leaving Marta and Dr. James in awkward silence. They haven't been introduced.

MARTA

Hi.

JENNA

Hello.

MARTA

I'm Marta Ortley. I'm new.

DAWN  
I'm giving Marta her orientation.

MARTA  
(flashes a smile)  
How nice. Welcome aboard.

Dawn returns, hands the Death Certificate to Dr. James-- and Marta might as well have just vanished into thin air:

JENNA  
(to Dawn, re: the form)  
I'm assuming respiratory arrest?  
(Dawn nods)  
You do know there's a fecal deposit on that chair.

DAWN  
Uh-huh. We're on top of it.

JENNA  
Is it mine?

Marta looks to Dawn, confused.

DAWN  
(carefully)  
Possibly.

JENNA  
"Possibly"?  
(half-beat)  
Is it one of mine for my fecal collection?

DAWN  
Uhm. I'm not sure--

JENNA  
The Cleveland Conference, next month, is fast approaching--

DAWN  
Jenna--

JENNA  
(a familiar, croaking rebuke)  
Ehhh eh--?

DAWN  
Yes, No, I know. I have been sending the samples to the lab, but-- I just didn't think since it was just randomly left on a chair--

JENNA

It's a perfectly good sample, as good as any other--

DAWN

Yeah, but I already asked Marta to red bag it--

MARTA

What ARE red bags? I don't even--

JENNA

Well clearly she hasn't.

DAWN

But as soon as she does--

JENNA

Dawn, please. I don't want it red bagged. I want it put in a tray and sent to the lab: attention Dr. James.

DAWN

It's just, we had to do an Incident Report on it, because of C. diff and infections, and ideally I still need to identify WHOSE it is--

JENNA

Well it's that patient's right there-- sitting across from it, right?

DAWN

No. I don't think it's Birdy's.

MARTA

I think it could be.

DAWN

Well, maybe--

JENNA

Does it look like a recent one of hers?

DAWN

Uhm. It's along the same lines-- It's just, Birdy's usually diapered and can't get them off herself, so--

JENNA

Look, there's no signs of C. diff. It's well formed, it has no irregularities-- So...?

DAWN

I guess we could put in a tray and call the lab to come and get it.

JENNA

Oh thank you. Would you do that for me? It's really important that I have enough data for my statistics to be absolutely air tight.

(re: the form and Lilian)

The deceased was eighty seven, I'm assuming? From the cake?

DAWN

Eighty seven, yes, it's actually her birthday, which means she was born on--

JENNA

(pro forma "Awww"; then:)

It looks delicious. I wonder if it's butter cream or--

DAWN

Her sister's coming in later, so--

JENNA

Well. That's a shame.

She finishes the death certificate, then hands it to Marta:

JENNA (CONT'D)

Nurse, I need a copy-- would you mind?

Marta takes the certificate and steps into the small office. Dr. James makes sure she's left, then turns to Dawn, sotto:

JENNA (CONT'D)

Listen, one last thing. I need that bed-- the deceased's--

DAWN

I can't. Dr. Stickley already took it. An early onset Alzheimer's patient. Burned herself pretty badly.

JENNA

Do you have anything else opening up?

DAWN

No, nothing.

JENNA

It's for a patient who's recovering from prostate surgery--

DAWN

A man?

JENNA

Well, obviously. I'm working on another study to see if this particular drug helps prevent dementia and memory loss after general anaesthesia in the elderly--

DAWN

Beverly is gonna flip out--

JENNA

Oh, please, do we have to rehash this EVERY time I need a bed? None of these women will even know the difference if there's a man on the floor--

DAWN

(leading, cueing)  
Maybe if we had a private room--

JENNA

Oh. Well. What is the situation with the private rooms--?

DAWN

There's-- Mrs. Robinson. Recovering from shoulder surgery. Rehab.

JENNA

Okay. Mrs. Robinson. I could take a look at her. And then, Dawn, you'll make sure I get what I need?

DAWN

Yes.

Marta returns, shutting down the conversation. Dr. James steps off, then turns back:

JENNA

And we're totally aware of what needs to happen with that stool? It goes into a tray then straight to the lab, right? We're all on the same page?

DAWN

Yes. Absolutely. Got it.

GETTING ON #101 - "Born on the 4th of July" - HBO Draft 10.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - FRONT ENTRY - MOMENTS LATER

Three Male Medical Students (including ANDREW CESARIO, early 20s) kill time in front of the elevators. Dr. James arrives:

JENNA

Sorry, guys, you're giving up your holiday, but bonus points for diligence. Glad to finally have you with us, Mr. Cesario--

JUMP: leading them onto the floor, past a vista of Elderly Patients in various stages of Geriatric Distress:

JENNA (CONT'D)

(mostly for Andrew's benefit)  
We've got 36 beds on the floor, 14 sub-acute, 17 dementia and Alzheimers, the ventilator suite--

JUMP: passing a very wrinkled patient with a bandaged nose:

JENNA (CONT'D)

"Know your population". In Southern California, if it looks like a melanoma, it IS a melanoma. Save yourself the trouble: just cut it out.

Passing a woman pushing a cart:

JENNA (CONT'D)

Hello Irma. Como esta?

Dawn steps in, leads Dr. James and Students into a quad, then to the bed of a LOUDLY YAMMERING Asian Patient, late 70s.

JENNA (CONT'D)

(leaning in)  
Good morning! I'm Dr. Jenna James. How are you? Do you know where you are? You're in the Billie Barnes Extended Care Unit. Do you know what day it is?

DAWN

She doesn't seem to speak English.  
(to Patient)  
This is Dr. James. She's our Director of Medicine--

JENNA

(to Students)  
Temporarily. I'm just filling in til they find the right person.

(MORE)

JENNA (CONT'D)

I'm actually a "real" doctor over in  
the hospital

(to Dawn)

Where's her chart?

DAWN

She doesn't have one. She was an  
emergency admit last night during the  
diversion.

JENNA

You would not believe the chaos in  
that E.R. from one AM on--

DAWN

Yeah, but diversion shouldn't mean  
just dumping them over here-- it means  
taking them to another HOSPITAL.

JENNA

The Paramedics are too lazy to drive  
over to PHLB or Memorial.

DAWN

She was found by Long Beach P.D.  
walking along the shoulder of the 110  
near San Pedro in her nightgown.

JENNA

Tsk. Increasingly common, isn't it?  
Very sad.

DAWN

So we don't actually know who she is.

Marta, nearby, listens as she feeds an elderly woman patient  
with a syringe through a feeding tube...

DAWN (CONT'D)

She's got a very high temperature.

JENNA

(to Students)

She's got a high temperature.

DAWN

Her blood pressure's low.

JENNA

(to Students)

Low blood pressure.

DAWN

And she's very confused.

JENNA  
(to Students)  
She's confused.

DAWN  
We think. She can't tell us whether she's confused, because obviously-- we don't understand her language--

JENNA  
(to Students)  
We can't really tell. We should assume she's confused.

DAWN  
Is it Chinese you're speaking?

JENNA  
No, Chinese is not-- that's not a language, Dawn. It's not a language.  
(to Students)  
There are dozens-- dozens of languages, dialects, in China.

DAWN  
Is it-- maybe it's Indonesian.  
(to Patient)  
Are you speaking Indonesian?

JENNA  
No. That's the same. The same-- thing. Well, the E.R. is up and running, so just send her over to the hospital.

DAWN  
But we're not allowed to move emergency admits until after a complete physical evaluation. So...  
(off some more BABBLING)  
Is "Patty" your name?  
(more BABBLE)  
That's it--? Your name is "PATTY?"

JENNA  
It sounded like Paw-tee, to me. She's saying "Paw-tea". She's not saying "Patty".

DAWN  
Well, maybe with her accent-- it comes out as "Paw-tea", but--

JENNA

I think Patty is a pretty unlikely name for a--

(more BABBLE)

Wait-- "Polly"? Is it "POLLY"--?

DAWN

That's PRETTY much what I said--

JENNA

Well for the time being, we should just assume it's Polly.

(to Students)

So. Differential diagnosis, Men. Where do we start here? Mr. Cesario?

ANDREW CESARIO

The feet?

JENNA

(Scowls, then re: his pocket)

What is that, Mr. Cesario? Is that a scalpel?

ANDREW CESARIO

Yes. We had a lab--

She plucks it from his pocket and puts it into hers:

JENNA

Well we don't go wandering around the hospital with sharp objects, here.

We're not the Crips and the Jets.

(puts on her stethoscope)

I'm going to have a little listen to your chest, now, Polly--

(listens, then:)

I can't hear a thing because of all her--

(makes a yapping gesture with her hand; to Dawn)

I think you're going to have to call Language Line.

DAWN

Yeah, if they're even in today. Should we think about giving her something to calm her down a bit-- I mean she's really agitated.

JENNA

Yes. That might be something we should think about.

MARTA

Are you really going to sedate someone  
who's just talking a little too much?

Jenna and Dawn's eyes, like deer caught in the headlights:

JENNA

Well, no one-- No one's being  
"sedated"--

DAWN

No. We're not one of those places that  
just dopes patients up for our own  
convenience--

MARTA

Well, I know, but--

DAWN

The signs of distress, Marta, are  
pretty clear, so, you know, she's  
agitated-- she could benefit from  
something that calms her down.

JENNA

(to Students)

The point is we're looking at the best  
interest of the patient here-- And--

(to "Polly")

I can't really give you a proper  
evaluation until we get Language Line.  
But we're going to take very good care  
of you and you're going to be as good  
as new. Dawn, where are we going next?

DAWN

We have Mrs. Drabinsky over here...

As Dawn, Dr. James and the Male Students move off, Marta  
leans down to "Polly" and takes her hand:

MARTA

It's okay. They found me wandering  
along the 405 in my pajamas after my  
brother's 50th. Don't worry, we're  
going to figure out who you are and  
everything's gonna be fine.

"Polly" goes silent, immediately responding to Marta.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - LILLIAN'S BED - DAY

Lillian lies dead while Marta removes things from a drawer in a bedside table, putting them in a plastic bag. Dawn keeps inventory on a clipboard.

DAWN

She says she's a "real" doctor-- well she's not. She's just a hired, staff-doctor over at the hospital-- that's how come they can make her fill in over here.

Marta takes a large bag of Gummy Bears from the drawer:

MARTA

What about-- can I take these--?

DAWN

What are they?

MARTA

Gummy Bears. My grandchildren love--

DAWN

Grandchildren? Gosh, you don't look old enough--

MARTA

Please. I hate it when people say that.

DAWN

Yeah, I know what you mean. Well, strictly speaking, it's our legal responsibility to return ALL of Lillian's possessions, and give them to Sandy when she comes, but why not? Just go ahead and take them.

Marta noisily stuffs the bag into her pocket.

DAWN (CONT'D)

But we're definitely saving that cake for Sandy. It's obviously homemade and she went to a lot of trouble to make it and she should get it back.

MARTA

Do you really think she wants to have her dead sister's birthday cake?

DAWN

Why not? I would.

MARTA  
(from the drawer)  
Here's some dentures.

DAWN  
Could you hand me those with the  
Vaseline? I've got to put 'em back in  
her mouth.

MARTA  
What's the Vaseline for--?

DAWN  
Her lips-- so I can slide the teeth in-

MARTA  
An "Architectural Digest". What on  
earth do you suppose she was doing  
with that?

DAWN  
Never too old to dream.

MARTA  
I guess so.

DAWN  
She still has her original uppers. She  
did pretty good for 87.

Marta roots around and finds another small case and opens it:

MARTA  
Jesus. Here's another set of teeth.

DAWN  
Those were her husband's. She kept her  
husband's dentures. Isn't that sweet?

MARTA  
It's a pretty ghoulish souvenir.

DAWN  
I dunno. It's something personal.

MARTA  
I guess. You could wear them on a  
nice, subtle silver chain.

DAWN  
Hand me that Visene? We have to keep  
her well lubricated. She's a Tissue  
Donor.

MARTA

Oh wait, here's a book-- "The Menendez Brothers: Bad Blood."

DAWN

That was ages ago. Didn't they-- right, right, they were those cute guys who killed their father.

MARTA

Ugh. Could you kill your own father?

DAWN

I don't really even want to think about it.

MARTA

I could have killed my mother, though. Very easily. I spent years trying.

DAWN

You're funny.

Dawn stands, hands Marta the Visene, prepares to leave:

DAWN (CONT'D)

Here-- just keep putting drops in her eyes until Antoine gets here. The lab gets pissed off if they dry out. I guess that's it, everything she came with. Hand me the cake, file this in her folder-- call over to the hospital and see if they have anything to add-- I'll call Antoine. Wait til you meet Antoine, he's really yummy. And put a pad beneath her mid section.

(off Marta's look)

Trust me. Just do it.

She exits with the cake and the bag of belongings.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - BATHROOM - DAY

Marta, on her cell, by a cracked window in the tiny, cramped bathroom, unwraps a condom:

MARTA

I'm in so far over my head. There's like five hundred million forms thrown at me, none of it sticks, I can't remember a thing, I'm like five years away from being in one of these beds with dementia myself. I don't think I can do it, I really don't-- Hold on--

She hops up on the toilet, covers a sprinkler head in the ceiling with the condom, lights a quick cigarette, then returns to her phone:

MARTA (CONT'D)

(lighting her cig)

I'm back. What time is your interview?

(half-beat)

I know it's "beneath you"-- but you've got to at least try...

(half-beat)

Don't say that, Dave, you're not too old, that's not true. We've got-- we've got to hang in there. Oh, God. Don't cry. We'll get by. We will.

An ambulance siren passes outside.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Marta, a bit-bug eyed, taking everything in, behind the desk. Dawn on the phone, on hold.

The "feces" chair near the station, hastily marked off with a couple of bands of "Yellow Caution" tape.

BEVERLY RHAYNES, the Supervising Nurse, an African American woman in her 50s approaches.

BEVERLY

How you doing, Marta?

MARTA

Good. Great, thanks.

BEVERLY

How are your feet?

MARTA

Swollen and tired.

BEVERLY

It takes about a week to get used to being on them again all day.

DAWN

(to Beverly)

We're still waiting for Antoine.

MARTA

I keep putting in the Visene but I'm afraid her eyeballs may be getting a little-- they're kinda-- crunchy...

DAWN  
(to Beverly)  
Tissue Donor.

BEVERLY  
(sniffs something)  
What is that smell?

DAWN  
Uhm, I think, well, yeah, I don't  
know. I mean, It could be Dr. James'  
fecal collection.

BEVERLY  
Excuse me?

DAWN  
Oh. I thought you knew about-- I mean,  
Dr. James is doing a study. On--

BEVERLY  
No, no, no-- you did NOT let that  
woman talk you into--

DAWN  
Yes, no, we've been collecting--

BEVERLY  
Turds? Oh no you have not. How many?  
For how long?

DAWN  
A couple weeks now. She said she sent  
you a memo--

Dawn indicates the "feces" chair; Beverly, aghast, lunges at  
the chair, rips the "caution" tape off, then turns to Dawn:

BEVERLY  
How long has that been sitting there?!

DAWN  
A couple hours. I didn't want you to  
have to see it--

BEVERLY  
No, no, no--

DAWN  
No, I know-- But I need to identify  
whose it is, before the lab takes it--

BEVERLY

For fuck's sake, Dawn! We get an infections report with rampant C. Diff, almost lost our fucking license--

DAWN

I know, that's why I'm trying to identify it, for the Report, to build a record--

BEVERLY

(to Marta)

Get this out of my sight. Please. Right away.

MARTA

I tried to take it, then I was told to leave it--

BEVERLY

No. Now. Right now.

DAWN

Maybe you should talk to Dr. James--

BEVERLY

Make it go away.

MARTA

I don't want to get in any trouble--

BEVERLY

(to Dawn)

And you-- I mean, I can't believe how you suck up to her. She's only nice to you when she wants something from you-- she uses you for all her bullshit studies-- well we are done collecting turds for that crazy ass woman. We are inches away from losing Medicare reimbursement altogether--

(off Marta's hesitation)

What are you waiting for?

MARTA

Okay, but--

Beverly fixes her with a look. Marta grabs a Kleenex and snatches it up.

BEVERLY

What is the one thing I have brought up with you again and again and again in your assessments?

DAWN  
Floor cleanliness.

BEVERLY  
Well I'm just saying.

DAWN  
I'm sorry. I'm really, really sorry,  
Beverly.

Marta crosses in front of them, exiting with the "Kleenex."

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Marta flushes the "Kleenex" down the toilet.

Distant THUDS from fireworks, outside.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - ASIAN PATIENT'S BED - DAY

"Polly", now sitting upright in bed, still YAMMERING away.  
Dawn tends to a Patient, nearby. The phone RINGS at the  
Nurse's Station and Marta runs to answer it:

MARTA  
Hello, Extended Care, fifth floor.  
Nurse Ortley.  
(yells across)  
Dawn?

DAWN  
Yeah?

MARTA  
It's the Language Line to translate.

DAWN  
Jesus. Finally. When are they coming?

MARTA  
They can't send someone til tomorrow.

DAWN  
No, that's not good enough. We have to  
take care of this now. If we can tell  
them what she's saying-- Can they just  
translate it over the phone? Wait--

Dawn listens to Polly, then repeats the gibberish to Marta:

DAWN (CONT'D)  
(stumbling, at first:)  
Yung-- in a yung a yule tea?  
(MORE)

DAWN (CONT'D)  
(with more confidence:)  
Ina yunga-yulatee.

MARTA (INTO PHONE)  
Ina-yunga-yulatea.

DAWN  
Nuva nah da took soom.  
(nails it)  
Nuva nada tucksom.

MARTA  
Nuva nada tucksom. He says the first  
one doesn't mean a thing.

DAWN  
What? Hang on, We have to do it over.  
(JUMP:)  
Soom nyack-- nyack me bock.

MARTA (INTO PHONE)  
Soom nyack me bock.  
(to Dawn)  
No, that doesn't mean anything either.

DAWN  
Put it on speaker.

MARTA  
How?

DAWN  
Press hold then intercom then line--

MARTA  
Hold what then what?

DAWN  
Intercom then line, whatever line--

MARTA  
How do I know which line--

DAWN  
Cause it BLINKS--

MARTA  
What blinks--?

DAWN  
Marta, it flashes-- can't you see it  
flashing--?

MARTA

I don't know how it works, okay?!

DAWN

Just-- then just put the phone up,  
hold it out, and if they can-- see if  
they can hear it that way--

Marta holds the phone out so the translator can hear Polly:

DAWN (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Tell them we think it's something  
Chinesey--

(after a good riff of Polly)

Yeah, that was a really good one--

MARTA (INTO PHONE)

You did get that? Great--

(half-beat; then to Dawn)

He says she said "I can't stand this,  
I wish I were dead, please kill me."  
It's Khmer. She's Cambodian.

DAWN

Cambodian! Fantastic! I knew it was  
something like that. Keep him on the  
line til we can figure out who she is  
and what her story is--

MARTA

I need-- I need to get a pad and a  
pen.

DAWN

Hurry, Marta, or we'll get into more  
trouble with Beverly-- Language Line  
charges by the minute!

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Dr. James enters with Dawn (consumed with deep resentment at  
her) to discover a frail MRS. ROBINSON, 70s, in the bed:

JENNA

Good Afternoon, Mrs. Robinson. Koo-koo-  
cahoo!

DAWN

(not amused)

That's "I AM THE WALRUS."

JENNA

Oh. Well. I just thought-- Joke...  
(to Mrs. Robinson)  
And how are we feeling, today?

MRS. ROBINSON

I just really, really want to go home.

JENNA

Well, that's exactly what we like to hear-- because believe me-- we want you out and in your own home, too.  
(not really looking)  
Now, going over the results here-- of your scans-- it looks like your shoulder has responded very well.

MRS. ROBINSON

The Physical Therapist says she won't let me go until I can raise my arm.

Mrs. Robinson demonstrates a pathetic lack of mobility.

JENNA

Yes, I've read her report. I definitely need to consult with her.

MRS. ROBINSON

Could you really do that for me? She said if I left it would be against her medical advice and--

JENNA

Well, is SHE a doctor? No. I'm the doctor, aren't I?

A glance between Dawn and Jenna.

MRS. ROBINSON

It's just the soup cans and tuna fish are all on the top shelves, I can't reach. But I don't care. I'll eat crackers.

DAWN

Do you have anyone who can help you once you get home? Any children--?

MRS. ROBINSON

We're not talking. I'll be fine on my own. I'm very independent. That's the only thing that matters to me.

GETTING ON #101 - "Born on the 4th of July" - HBO Draft 25.

ANGLE: across the hall, Marta and ANTOINE ROBERTSON, a so-so looking African American orderly, 30s - 40s, emerge from Lillian's room pushing a morgue cart-- essentially a cheap metal coffin on wheels.

ANTOINE

Hold on--

He grabs a fitted, cheery, quilted Calico cover and spreads it over the cart. It fools no one; patients still stare...

MARTA

That's some cologne, Antoine.

ANTOINE

It's the cart cover. "Apple Sauce."  
They come in different fragrances.

MARTA

Like you get at a car-wash?

ANTOINE

Pretty much.

MARTA

Do they have "New Car Smell?"

And they're down the hallway and turn the corner...

JENNA

Well, I admire your resilience and we certainly know many patients can recover more quickly in familiar surroundings.

DAWN

I just-- I think I need to mention there are certain liability issues.

JENNA

This isn't a prison and no one can stop you from signing yourself out.

MRS. ROBINSON

I've never felt better in my life.

JENNA

Well here's to you, Mrs. Robinson!

(to Dawn)

If all our patients had this can-do spirit-- well-- what would we doctors do for a living? Just do the paperwork, Dawn.

DAWN

I'll get it ready--

JENNA

Thanks a lot-- I appreciate it.

(under her breath)

And I need the bed right away-- so  
let's make it a priority, okay?

Dr. James leaves. Dawn turns to Mrs. Robinson.

DAWN

Let's get you up and dressed--

MRS. ROBINSON

I'm so excited to go--

DAWN

(not happy about this)

Of course you are. Who wouldn't be?

INT. MOUNT PALM HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA - DUSK

Dawn and Marta at a table, eating their dinner off trays.

DAWN

Dr. Garibaldi was a really good  
Director of Medicine, but he got shit  
canned over the bad infections report.  
They've been interviewing for three  
months. You'd think, with this economy--  
- maybe it's that report, everyone  
says we're dragging down the whole  
medical center. Plus, people think  
extended care's boring-- it's totally  
where the action is. We're about care,  
not just all slam-bam-thank-you-ma'am.  
(half-beat)

God. We do need some testosterone in  
the unit, though. I went to an all-  
girls' Catholic School-- just forget  
about it. Like with Dr. James? It's  
funny, I really don't believe in  
gossip in the workplace, it's so  
negative, but she's actually on  
estrogen replacement therapy. Plus her  
marriage is on the skids. I'm full. Do  
you want my Kabob? I haven't touched  
it.

MARTA

No. But thanks.

DAWN

How long were you in Las Vegas?  
(off Marta's shrug)  
No, seriously. Blah, blah, blah... I  
talk too much.

MARTA

Almost twenty years. We left after the  
Northridge Quake in '94. I just  
couldn't take it anymore. Not much  
gets to me-- but after that my nerves  
were shot. And I was pretty burned out  
on nursing.

DAWN

Yeah. That can happen.

MARTA

Then the bottom fell out in Vegas, we  
lost our shirts and came crawling  
back. So here I am, fresh out of  
mothballs and back in the workforce.

DAWN

It takes a while to get the hang of  
it. I cried every night on my way home  
from work for my first two months.

MARTA

Why?

DAWN

Cause I take my job really seriously.  
Maybe I care too much. I mean--nothing  
is more important to me-- than taking  
care of the women-- the elderly women--  
that have been entrusted to my care.

(she begins to cry)

We work just as hard as anyone over in  
that hospital, ten times as hard! And--  
I've almost been fired twice. Big  
deal. I'm really sorry-- I just got  
off four month's probation for  
cleanliness infractions-- I have to go  
now--

Dawn leaves. Marta pensive, sips her coffee...

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

Antoine pushes a wheelchair with JUDY NIELSEN, late 70s,  
quite beautiful, a vase of red roses on her lap, up to Dawn,  
slumped at the computer.

ANTOINE

This is patient: Nielsen, Judy.  
(reading from her wrist band)  
Birth date: four-thirteen-thirty four.  
Judy's looking pretty good to me.

He hands Dawn her chart.

DAWN

Yeah, okay, but what is she doing here? I don't have any beds.

ANTOINE

Beverly told me to bring her up to 506, the private room.

DAWN

She didn't tell me about this--

Dawn frantically reads the chart--

ANTOINE

All I know is I was told to bring her here to the private room.

DAWN

But I can't do that-- right now.  
Antoine! Who is her referring doctor?

ANTOINE

Isn't it on the chart?

Dawn throws down the chart and comes around to Judy and takes the roses from her lap.

DAWN

Hi, Judy. I'm Dawn. We're going to get this all worked out. Okay?  
(hands Antoine the roses)  
These aren't allowed on the floor any more, so you're gonna have to take them away. Too many patients try to eat them--

Marta arrives, Dawn's all business, again.

DAWN (CONT'D)

What's going on with 506?

MARTA

It's ready. Look at those roses, they're gorgeous.

ANTOINE

So 506 is available?

DAWN

No, it's not, it's spoken for--

Jenna arrives at the station with an Elderly Male Patient in a wheelchair. She parks him next to Judy.

JENNA

Is the room ready?

DAWN

Uhm-- yes.

(re: Judy)

But this patient is apparently going into 506--

JENNA

Fine. But my patient is just out of recovery and has a time sensitive questionnaire to go over-- so maybe we could settle him in the private room, and then you can situate her in 506?

DAWN

It's just-- 506 IS the private room.

JENNA

Well-- that's impossible. And is there a particular reason why she needs a private room?

Beverly arrives at the station:

BEVERLY

I hear you've been very busy.

JENNA

Well you know. It's a holiday. I love to keep busy when everyone else is taking a day off!

BEVERLY

Well to answer your question-- SHE has to go into the private because we're monitoring her heart.

JENNA

Yes, but I need that bed.

BEVERLY

She came in for surgery and then had a stroke on the operating table.

(MORE)

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

She's been in the hospital for two weeks but her heart still hasn't stabilized-- so she's going into that room.

MARTA

Should I take her now?

BEVERLY

Yes.

JENNA

No-- Beverly-- You can monitor her heart from a quad-- You cannot take that bed away from me-- It's mine, damnit--

BEVERLY

You do not OWN this floor, Jenna. You do not get to waltz over here and do studies for drug companies or shit studies or whatever--

JENNA

(glares at Dawn; then:)

It's really none of your business how many studies-- OR what I do my research on, is it--?

She suddenly notes the "chair" has been removed.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Nurse, what happened to the feces that was on that chair?

MARTA

I flushed it. Down the toilet.

JENNA

You flushed it down the toilet.

(Marta nods, nervously)

You-- You just flushed away an important lump of information--

BEVERLY

Are you finished, Jenna?

JENNA

No, I am not finished--

BEVERLY

Then let's just move this right on off my floor--

JENNA

Have you ever even heard of the  
Bristol Stool Chart?

MARTA

Yes. Actually-- they taught us THAT in  
Nursing School, back in the dark ages--

JENNA

I am trying to expand the Bristol  
Stool Chart from seven to an  
exhaustive sixteen types of patient  
feces. It's the twenty first fucking  
century. Do you really think there are  
still only seven categories of stool!

MARTA

Beverly told me to flush it, so I  
flushed it--

BEVERLY

And I'm tired of you using MY nurses--

JENNA

I need to stress that this work is  
important to me-- and to the prestige  
of this Medical Center-- and if I say  
I need a stool sample put in a tray  
and sent to the lab--

MARTA

Dawn told me to flush it, too.

JENNA

You're not listening-- I don't care  
who told you what, I am telling you to--

MARTA

Save. Your. Shit.

JENNA

If you want to put it like that--

MARTA

Okay. Fine. I'll do that from now on.  
I'll even save my own shit for you.

JENNA

Lovely. Just lovely--

BEVERLY

You can't just use this facility for  
every crazy--

JENNA

Excuse me-- you are not MY Supervising Nurse, Beverly. And YOU can't talk to a DOCTOR at this hospital-- like that.

BEVERLY

You're on STAFF at this hospital and right now you are in MY facility.

JENNA

Yes. I run back and forth! Back and forth from dusk to dawn! Forty of the last forty-eight hours! I could be in Maui at a Luau for Christ's sake! But no-- I work tirelessly, I work on holidays-- And in exchange, maybe a little respect--

(distracted; struggling to remove her lab jacket)

Do you want to know why no one is taking this job--?! Because it's a dead end--! Because no one with any kind of self respect or a career still on the rails would ever work over here in this dump--!

BEVERLY

Do I need to call security?

JENNA

I don't care any more, I really just don't care--

She dumps her lab jacket. The scalpel tumbles out onto the table. A beat...

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - DIRECTOR OF MEDICINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. James sits in the tiny office directly adjacent to the Station. She stares into space, an unguarded moment where we see a near existential weariness...

There's a quick RAP on her door. She comes to, dons her armor, glances up:

JENNA

Paul! A friendly face! How are you?

In the doorway: DR. PAUL STICKLEY, pompous with oily authority.

STICKLEY

Am I interrupting?

JENNA

Of course not. You? I'd ask you to sit down but... this awful, claustrophobic office. Thank God, it's only temporary! I'd rather die...

STICKLEY

I came over to make sure my patient got into her bed and I heard about the little dust up--

JENNA

Oh, that. Just a bad joke at the end of a long shift-- but "the fireworks" are over.

STICKLEY

When people heard about it they were frightened-- for you, of course--

JENNA

Paul. It was just a little-- a dramatic gesture-- some dark humor.

STICKLEY

You threatened everyone on the ward with a scalpel--

JENNA

I did not. Such ridiculousness. And if by some chance it was construed that I did, you know me, it was tongue very much in cheek--

STICKLEY

Security escorted you out.

JENNA

(simply)  
No. I left before they arrived.

STICKLEY

(not:)  
Well you don't have to worry, Jenna. Everyone's firmly on your side.

JENNA

Oh, that's so good to know.

STICKLEY

There's great affection for you from all your colleagues at the hospital. What would Geriatrics do without you?

JENNA

(in a "baby voice")  
That's so sweet of you.  
(half-beat)  
Do you have a minute?

STICKLEY

For you I'll make one.

JENNA

Really, something's got to be done  
about Beverly...

She closes the door on "us".

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - BIRDY'S ROOM / BATHROOM - NIGHT

As Marta wheels Birdy into the bathroom, Dawn pops in:

DAWN

Hey-- how about having a piece of  
cake? I can't get Sandy, so what the  
heck, let's celebrate. It's still the  
Fourth. And it's your first day.

MARTA

Okay. Let me just finish up in here.

Dawn leaves. QUICK, DISCRETE CUTS as Marta toilets Birdy:  
Marta kneels; gloves on--

MARTA (CONT'D)

Can you stand?

BIRDY

I can, but I get dizzy.

MARTA

Hold on to the rail, put your other  
hand on my shoulder.

Marta's hands slide the diaper down Birdy's smooth thighs,  
then calves; one foot steps out, then the other; the diaper  
tossed away.

MARTA (CONT'D)

Go ahead and sit-- lean forward--

Marta bent over-- wiping. Then the fresh diaper; one foot in,  
then the other-- sliding up the legs, pulled up over the  
waist-- a playful snap of the elastic--

MARTA (CONT'D)

Clean as a whistle and ready for bed.

BIRDY

Can you help me find my purse, Honey?  
I need my keys. I need to get to the  
office.

MARTA

Here-- let me help you to the office.

LONG: Marta "walks" Birdy from bathroom to bed: Birdy weak and unsteady, her hands on Marta's shoulders, Marta's hands under Birdy's arms, holding her up, a mutual embrace, Birdy in her shorty pink gown and big, puffy fresh, clean diaper... Marta sets her gently on the bed.

BIRDY

Thank you, Honey.

Marta tucks Birdy in.

BIRDY (CONT'D)

Did you take it?

MARTA

Take what?

BIRDY

My offering.

MARTA

You mean-- from the chair--? Was that  
yours?

BIRDY

I wanted to put it under my pillow.

MARTA

What for? The shit fairy?

BIRDY

For my twenty-five cents.

MARTA

Oh Birdy. I'll tell you what. You look  
under your pillow in the morning and  
you might have a nice surprise.

Marta turns to leave.

BIRDY

Don't leave me, Honey. I get scared.

MARTA

I know.

GETTING ON #101 - "Born on the 4th of July" - HBO Draft 36.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - NURSE'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Dawn scarfing down the cake. SANDY SAKS, a stooped, resigned and soft-spoken 80, enters.

DAWN  
Oh, God--

She shoves the cake out of sight. One last mouth full, then:

DAWN (CONT'D)  
Sandy! Hi!

SANDY  
Hello.

DAWN  
(chewing, swallowing)  
Hello. Thanks so much for coming in.

SANDY  
I got your message.

DAWN  
(clears throat)  
Yes. I just need to talk to you about  
your sister.

She escorts Sandy to a quiet area with two chairs.

DAWN (CONT'D)  
Would you like to sit down.

SANDY  
No.

Suddenly the elevator dings open and a Beverly whisks over:

DAWN  
Beverly, listen, I'm really sorry--

BEVERLY  
How did you hear already?

DAWN  
(riffing)  
People gossip.

BEVERLY  
Yeah. Well that crazy white bitch got  
my ass fired.

DAWN  
Oh my God. Oh-- I'm so sorry.

BEVERLY

I thought you already heard.

DAWN

(she hadn't)

Yes, but I'm still sorry.

BEVERLY

God I'm happy to get away from her--  
you couldn't pay me to stay--

(she hugs Dawn)

You've been a really good friend-- a  
good nurse--

Beverly turns and quickly hurries away--

DAWN

Beverly--

Sandy, meanwhile has taken a seat. Dawn sits across from her:

DAWN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about that.

SANDY

It's okay.

DAWN

I just wanted to tell you that I'm so  
sorry, but Lilian, she passed away  
this morning.

(takes Sandy's hand)

I'm really Sorry.

SANDY

She's dead?

DAWN

Would you like to see her? To hold  
her? I can make arrangements.

SANDY

Thank you. Okay. That would be good.

Marta steps from Birdy's quad, to observe:

DAWN

We have the partially filled out death  
certificate that you need to bring to  
the funeral home. Do you have a  
funeral home in mind?

SANDY

No. I didn't think it would happen so fast.

DAWN

I was with her when she died.

SANDY

You were?

DAWN

I was holding her hand.

SANDY

Did she ask about me?

DAWN

Yes. She did. She said she loved you very much.

Marta, moved, steps forward:

MARTA

Hello, Sandy. I'm Marta. Can I get you anything? Water?

DAWN

A glass of water?

SANDY

Yes. Water would be nice. Thank you.

MARTA

Sure thing. No problem.

DAWN

Thanks very much, Marta.

Marta nods, walks past the front desk, and wipes frame. She's found meaning here. A purpose. We sense she's "in"...

END OF EPISODE.