

WHAT THE OLD GUY SAID

a very funny monologue

by Leon Kaye

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WHAT THE OLD GUY SAID

CARNEY, seventy-six years old, dressed in a crumpled shirt, suit and tie, drudges toward a dais. When there, he pulls out a small stack of index cards, faces the audience...

CARNEY

Mister Congressman, sir. Esteemed people... ordinary folk, much like myself, and all the rest of ya... I'm here to talk about the President's new health care plan and how it's affected Medicare... actually I want to complain about it. That's what these town meetings are for, aren't they? So people like me get to complain. Anyway, I think seniors are getting a raw deal here. I hear they're closing up some of the health care facilities downtown, consolidating... cutting some of our services --

(clears throat, quickly pulls out
a handkerchief to his mouth)

Sorry. Haven't had my flu shot yet. No need to tell you seniors out there that are waiting. I'm forty-seventh on the list down at the clinic. I'm hoping I get the shot soon. Sometime before I keel over and die -- that would be nice.

(beat)

Maybe there'd be more money in the state funds if the docs didn't prescribe so much medicine. I'm on nine prescriptions, NINE PRESCRIPTIONS! You need a scorecard just to keep track. Heck, I could start my own baseball team. My son tells me, You don't like all the medicine, flush 'em down the toilet. I tell him, that's where it goes eventually. Sometimes four times in a day. Especially if you take that fiber laxative. You know the liquid kind? Man, that stuff rips through you like five thirsty Irishmen going through a pitcher of Guinness.

(beat)

Then it says possible side effects -- dry mouth, irritability, dizziness, indigestion, impotence, urinary problems, difficulty breathing -- and I'm thinking to myself, "these are the reasons I'm taking the dern pills!" It's like robbing Peter to pay Paul! I'm taking the heart pills, and they're making me sick to my stomach. I'm taking the stomach pills, and they're giving me palpitations.

(beat)

My son tells me I don't have to read the papers they give out with the prescriptions. He tells me all that information is on the internet anyway. He says I should be doing searches and reading up on stuff in cyber-libraries and such. I've got an I-B-M. And it gives me I-B-S! Makes my bowels irritable. My son says I'm irritable, why shouldn't my bowels be too? Ya know, I should have done that one in when he was small and defenseless. Would saved me years of headache.

(beat)

And it says on the medication bottle I shouldn't be driving when I'm on the medicine... which is all the time. It says my judgment might be impaired or I might have blackouts, or get so dizzy I need to sit down -- but that don't stop me. I've gotta drive cause I need to get to places... like the drugstore for example. So I need my car. And I need to go

to the clinic. Nobody's doing these things for me, right?
Don't ask my son to be driving me, or picking up any medicine
for me. No, sir. He's too busy looking stuff up on the
internet, getting refinancing on his mortgage and new credit
cards. (beat)

I went down to one of them health food stores the other day.
I thought maybe they have something I could take to replace
some of these medications. You know, some of these pills do
a number on ya.

(beat)

This woman down there tells me I should be taking grapefruit
seed extract. I look at the price of this little jar and it's
six bucks! I tell her I'll buy the whole dern grapefruit down
at the grocers and just swallow the seeds.

(to audience)

Makes sense, right? Well, this woman looks at me like I'm
nuts or something. Then she goes and buys Tofu-flavored ice
cream. Yeah, I'm the one that's nuts!

(beat)

And I don't have to tell you seniors about the service down
at the clinic. I'll tell you Mister Congressman, it's pretty
bad actually. I know there's a nursing shortage, so you can
just imagine the level of nursing we get down there. Just to show ya,
I asked one if I could get my blood pressure checked, and she
asked, "would you like some fries with that?"

(beat)

Doctors aren't much better. They're just there at the clinic
cause they have to be. So they could keep their hospital
privileges... and their work visas. I could swear one of them
doctors was cutting my neighbors lawn that very morning. Half
of 'em don't even speak real English. I think Indian is their
second language and English is way down on the list.

(he coughs into his handkerchief)

Sorry again. I'm getting chills now, so maybe I'm coming down
with something.

(coughs again)

Maybe you people in the first row should put your hands up like
a shield. Yeah, that's right. Did you have your flu shots?

(beat)

Must have the good health insurance, right?

(beat)

Dern yuppies.

(beat)

Anyway, like I was saying, either the doctors are just outta
medical school, they don't speak English. The woman doctor at the
clinic is a proctologist, so you can figure where her mind's at

(beat)

This one Indian woman at the clinic wanted to give me a full
physical -- and she wasn't even a doctor. She's something new
-- they call it a P-A.

(beat)

A nurse that can write prescriptions. They call them P-A's.
And they make themselves up to look like real doctors. They
wear white coats, and they got the stethoscope.

(beat)

So I was due for a colonoscopy. So I say, fine, bring it on. I'm ready for it. I do the fasting. I do the salty soda drink that cleans you out better than a whole box of prunes.

And I get my son to drive me down to the clinic. So they make me lie down on this bed and wait for the doctor. So I wait forty-five minutes, freeze my extremities off, and finally the doctor comes...

another Indian woman. So this is the hand I'm dealt. I figure this is the best I'm gonna get. At least this woman is a bonafide doctor, and she's in her fifties. I'm thinking she's gotta be competent. So I let her take a look at me.

(coughs)

Next thing I know, I'm lying sideways on a table, and there's this little tv set next to me. And the Indian doctor says she's gonna "twilight" me. I told her don't do me any favors. And lo and behold, I feel this tube down there in South Florida. And I'm thinking to myself, all right Carney -- you've been through the Korean War, how bad could this be?

(coughs, uses his index card
to wipe his mouth)

Sorry, ran out of clean tissues.

(pockets the index card)

Now, I've had a few of these -- rectal invasions before and they're not pleasant but I got through it okay. So I'm laying there, watching this video camera as it goes on its expedition. And I feel the little tube making it's way north -- through the Carolinas, into Virginia, Maryland, New York, bound for the New England region. Then the fast food nurse runs into the room and says we've gotta evacuate the building. Someone called and said there's a bomb ready to go off in the clinic. Everybody's gotta get out now!