



An Untimely Death on Passchendaele Ward

Scene 12: The Tribunal

Tarpow

So who's going to be running the enquiry?

O'Render

William Busher. You know the Right Honourable Mr William Busher, MBE, better known to most of us as Bill Busher.

Tarpow

Bill Busher?

Comm

That's right. Do you know him? In fact, he's arriving now.

Bill

I am the judge, I am the judge
Don't mess with me, 'cos I am the judge,
Justice must be seen to be done
I'm here for business, this ain't for fun,
Gonna look at the facts, and state the case
And inject righteousness into this place,
Don't expect no mercy from me,
I'm paid by a firm from over the sea,
they pay my wage, and they write my cues,
just too bad if it goes against you.
I'm a hot shot daddy from the corporation,
Gonna hit you with ma medication
Do some good, while I make some wealth
Put the mental back into health.
All we want is to sell some stock,
When profits rise we can really rock.
We'll get you the stuff, till you can't get enough,
And when you're without it you'll feel real rough.
It's got to look legal, when we've scored.
So that's why I'm here to preserve the law
That's what all this show is for!
It's real time justice, it ain't no fudge,
So don't mess with me 'cos I am the judge.

Gus

Bill, what are you doing here?

Bill

I'm the chair, man.

Gus

And what's all this about the Right Honourable, and MBE?

Bill

Services to the community.

Gus

What community?

Bill

The community of politicians who wishes to stay in power and are not adverse to odd millions slipped into the old election chest. You know Gus, you've become so unimaginative since you started working for the NHS.

Gus

It's one of the requirements, I'm afraid.

Bill

Let's get this show on the road. Did you hear something? Are we ready for the first report?

O'Render

Yes, sir. The Nurse's report is as follows. On the 3rd of March I had begun my shift as usual and noticed nothing untoward. The changeover was uneventful.

Bill

Look, hold on, do we have to go through this malarkey. Was it in your opinion, an accident?

O'Render

Yes, sir.

Bill

Well, that's good enough for me. Mr. Tarpow, do you have anything to add?

Gus

No, sir.

Bill

Mr. Commissioner. I take it you've done a thorough investigation?

Comm

Yes, sir. The patient was accidentally killed by suffocation.

Bill

And no suspicious circumstances?

Comm

No, sir.

Bill

And no eye witnesses?

Comm

No, sir.

Bill

Even though 3 nurses admit to sitting on the mattress at the time?

O'Render

Well, it's very hard to see through a mattress, sir.

Bill

Point taken. And medication? No abnormalities there?

Comm

Well levels in the patient's blood were 4 times the maximum prescribed doses in the British National Formulary, but that is normal for Passchendaele Ward, sir. And as you know the BNF, the NHS bible on drugs, is just a guideline.

Bill

Meaning?

Gus

We can ignore it.

Bill

Well it all seems very clear and straightforward. I must return a verdict of accidental death.

Advocate

OK, that's enough! Stop this play! It's just too stupid!

Gus

Oh, no. It's the bloody advocate! What are you doing here? I don't have an appointment to see you until April 15th.

Advocate

It's March 28th actually.

Gus

No, that one's going to be cancelled at the last moment, actually.

Advocate

But that's too late! The play will be finished by then!

Gus

That's right! You're not supposed to get another line! You just appear as a running joke! A cheap laugh! (to Maria) And who the hell are you?

Maria

My name is Maria. I'm the newly appointed chair of the Patients' Council.

Deidre

And I'm the secretary.

Gus

We don't have a Patients' Council.

(all three) You do now.

Advocate

We've come to announce that the findings of this enquiry are null and void.

Maria

Yes, the Patients' Council, consisting of representatives from all wards on the unit, has carried out its own enquiry, the results of which are as follows: Unit Manager Gus

Tarpow.

Guilty of turning a blind eye to proceedings on Passchendaele Ward.

Gus

You can't say 'turning a blind eye'. That's disablist!

Deidre

OK, what about 'turned his fat arse' to proceedings.

Advocate

Yes, that's much more accurate!

Maria

Commissioner. Guilty of being ineffectual and corrupt. Investigating Officer. Guilty of being a lackey of the drug corporations, and of supplying class A drugs to mental patients for personal gain.

Bill

Come on, it's just a bit of dealing man!

Comm

Look, this is ridiculous. Supposing we don't agree with this decision?

Maria

We have patients at all units across the North of England poised for strike action.

Gus

All the mental patients are going to go on strike?

Advocate

From midnight tonight if our terms are not met.

O'Render

That's ridiculous. What difference will it make if all the mental patients go on strike?

Maria

Mad people keep your whole system going. Things would fall apart overnight if you didn't have mad people.

Deidre

Look at it this way. Every time anybody wants to step out of line, or stand up for themselves, what happens? The system puts a bit of pressure on you and you start to think you're going crazy.

Advocate

You think of us, and you step back into line.

Maria

If mental patients refused to accept their role as society's scapegoat the world would have to live with its own lunacy. It could no longer project its demented decisions on to us! It would have to recognise its own inherent madness. It would be the end of normality as we know it.

Comm

It would be the end of civilisation.

Bill

No more profits. We can't risk that at any cost. OK, what's the deal?

Maria

Well, for a start we demand that you start paying attention to the National Service Framework.

Gus

But we use it all the time.

Deidre

We want you to start reading it.

Gus

Reading it?

Gus

It's got words in it!

Bill

User involvement!

Gus

Carer's rights!

Bill

24 hour crisis care!

Gus

My God!

Advocate

And the second thing is a power-sharing executive, where patients' representatives have equal power with managers and nursing staff. And a majority on the board.

Gus

But that would give the patients power over the whole hospital!

Maria

Exactly. And an end to shock treatment.

O'Render

The machine's knackered anyway. It hasn't been maintained since 1973.

(all three)

Nurse Moking!

Tarpow

Yes, where is Moking? I haven't seen her for days.

Maria

Well I'm pleased to see the effects of your horrible drugs have worn off.

Moking

I was having a dreadful nightmare that I was working in a brutal oppressive regime.

Maria

Well, it's all over now.

Maria

Let the festivities begin. Today is the first day of the rest of our madness. Sing along everyone, the song's in your programme.

You lock the mental in,
Lock the mental out
In, out, in, out
Shuffling them about
You do some hocus-pocus
Keep juggling them around
'Cos that's what it's all about...

Do the Mental Okey Pokey
Don't let them think they're okey-dokey
Confuse them with your jiggery-pokey
'Cos that's what it's all about...out...out!

Medication in,
Understanding out,

In, out, in, out
Restrain them if they shout
Stripped of dignity and rights
Should be grateful for their stay
'Cos that's what it's all about...

Do the Mental Okey Pokey
Don't let them think they're okey-dokey
Keep them permanently dopey
'Cos that's what it's all about...out...out!

You plug them into this
Plug them into that
This, that, this, that
Like a guinea-pig or rat
But a revolution's brewing
In the patients' ranks today
'Cos that's what this play's about...

So, do the Mental Okey Pokey
Don't let them think they're okey-dokey
Hooray for mental folkey-wokey
Spread the good word all about...out...out!