

What would Humphrey Bogart think?

Short presentation at WONCA 2023 in Sydney on Thursday 26/10/23
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Introduction (Dr Buckley)

The purpose of this exercise is to think about the extra thoughts we have during consultations. We want to acknowledge that these thoughts occur and some of them are about what is happening in the consultation and some of them are not. They might be helpful, unhelpful or simply a distraction. They might be negative or even judgmental, but we have them.

This little demonstration is not meant to be a good or a bad consultation and not meant to be clinically challenging. It is intended as a light and humorous way to look at what goes on in the mind of the doctor during a consultation. You may never have the actual thoughts portrayed today, but you will certainly have some thoughts.

The film noir style of movie involves a key character self-narrating the movie in the first person. It is usually spoken in a dark and cynical way. One of the best-known exponents is Humphrey Bogart, especially as private detective, Sam Spade, in the movie *The Maltese Falcon*.

Movie references contained herein are added purely for your enjoyment.

What would Humphrey Bogart think?

Narrator: It was late on a hot and steamy Friday afternoon. It was late and I was running late, very late. And there was somewhere I wanted to be. I was clearly not going to make it on time.

She was my last patient. She was a new patient. I didn't know her, but I knew her type. Well-dressed efficient-looking, no doubt demanding. I knew the first thing she'd do is complain about how long she's waited. No, it doesn't look too dramatic with her just sitting calmly in the waiting room. But with a new patient, you can never tell. Well, here we go.

Dr Sam Spade: Ms Bacall? Thanks for waiting. I'm Dr Spade, Sam Spade.

Lauren Bacall: Thanks Dr Spade, call me Lauren. I'm just so pleased you could fit me in this afternoon.

Narrator: Well, that was unexpected; she's probably just warming up for the complex problem or 'special request'.

Sam: Well, let's get into it then.

Narrator: Oh, that was a bit blunt. Something about her makes me nervous. Slow down, Sam.

Lauren: My, you are the efficient one, aren't you?

Narrator: Mm ... She does not miss a trick, watch your step Sam.

Lauren: I really won't keep you long doctor. I think I just need a script.

Narrator: That was it! – the scary words. She thinks it won't take long, which usually means it will take long. And she has self-diagnosed already. Let's guess – painkillers or antibiotics?!

Sam: Okay Lauren – tell me what's going on and we'll see what I can do to help.

Narrator: Now that is cooler Sam; but don't seem too obliging just yet. Don't commit to anything until you know what she really wants.

Lauren: I have just moved to the area and don't have a doctor here yet. My last GP was **SO** good.

Narrator: Uh oh, alarm bells.

Lauren: I am usually well but get UTIs every now and then. I am catching a plane back to see my mum this evening and I think another UTI is starting.

Narrator: Okay antibiotics, not painkillers, That's a relief and it even sounds quite reasonable

Sam: Tell me about your symptoms Lauren.

Lauren: I usually get a lot of stinging and have to wee all the time and sometimes have some blood in my urine. I just started feeling the stinging a few hours ago and I have been to the toilet quite a few times this afternoon. Oh, I brought a urine specimen with me and gave it to your staff. They said they would test it and put the results in my file.

Narrator: Hmm, her old GP has trained her well. What time is it? I might make it tonight yet! Oops, did she see me glance at the clock? Old habits, I should have just looked at the time on my computer while pretending to check something else!

Lauren: I used to get quite sick so now I usually start antibiotics at the first sign of symptoms and recover quickly.

Sam: What used to happen?

Lauren: I would often get fevers and take a long time to get better. One time I ended up in hospital with pyelonephritis. I have had no big problems in the last few years though.

Narrator: Sounds easy enough, but I can't get lazy here and miss something.

Sam: Is there anything else you wanted to discuss today?

Narrator: Does that old consultation trick actually work?

Lauren: No, sorting that out for the weekend will do for today. I am usually well. But I would like to come back sometime and arrange to get my old records sent here.

Narrator: Okay, let's summarise and see if we can get this finished.

Sam: Okay, so you have some stinging with your urine and a bit of blood, just like the start of your UTIs but you feel otherwise well right now.

Narrator: Please say yes!

Lauren: Yes, that's right.

Sam: Have you felt feverish or had any pain in your back or tummy today?

Narrator: Please say no!

Lauren: No...not yet. That is what I am trying to avoid.

Sam: Are you on the pill or any other medications?

Lauren: No, I have a Mirena for contraception and I'm not on any regular tablets.

Sam: Are you allergic to any medications?

Lauren: No, not at all. Mostly I've been given trimethoprim and it's worked well.

Narrator: Okay Sam, you've got enough. Close it up. Let's get out of here.

Sam: Thanks Lauren. The notes say your urine shows some blood and protein, so I agree that trimethoprim is a good idea; one a day for seven days. I always send the specimen away as back-up in case you don't get better.

Lauren: Great, I should have just enough time to get them from the pharmacy on my way to the airport. Thanks Dr Spade. I'll come back and meet you properly in the next few weeks.

Sam: Great, we can check the results then and make sure you settled well with the trimethoprim. Let's organise with the reception staff to get your records here.

Narrator: Should I say it?

Sam: Now go ahead, get on that plane.

Lauren: Sam, this could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

Narrator: Ah, she got it!

SCENE ENDS