

I hate hospitals.

Hospitals are horrible places, filled with disease, death and bad coffee, as I understand these things. I visited one of my local hospitals last October and had less than a stellar experience.

It all started on a bright and sunny Sunday morning. I didn't go to church and perhaps that's why it all happened. I was sitting at my computer desk perusing the internet when I felt a strong, sharp, stabbing pain in my back. It receded, then returned, receded, then returned. This went on for a while.

I called my girlfriend, who is a nurse's assistant at one of the local hospitals. She told me to go to the ER. Now at this point I should tell you that I am not exactly well-off. Sure, I've got two jobs, but just enough to cover the expenses. I don't make much money, so a trip to the ER would set me back quite a few pesos.

I went anyway.

I asked a neighbor to drive me, and I spent what seemed like half an hour in the waiting room. Give your name, address, vital stats, bra size, all the usual items just to spend the next half an hour in some astringent soaked room waiting for a doctor to see you.

In an effort to speed up the process, I began screaming in pain. I screamed and screamed, watching the doctors' loaf about, chatting up their golf scores. I was aggravated, so I screamed some more.

It didn't work.

Finally the nurse comes in and asks what's wrong. I could've strangled her. My chief complaint had presented to the rude girl at the front desk and was given to whomever back here.

"Kidney pain," I said.

"Ah," she said. "I'll let the doctor know."

I sat on that bed, uncomfortable, cold, and open to the world and no one cared. Respite came when a new nurse came in, identifying herself as nurse so and so. I didn't care.

"As long as you make the pain go away, you're my new best friend."

She laughed, as all women do when they think I'm flirting. She began prepping me for an IV. I hate needles. No, not hate really, I just dislike the feeling of needles, anything, penetrating my skin.

The drugs enter your system and it takes seventeen minutes to work its way all the way through your body. It's the longest seventeen minutes of anyone's life.

When you are on high level pain killers like dilaudid, the world melts, like a Salvador Dali painting. The clocks come off the wall, making you think time has stopped completely. Not to add too many metaphors, but the people you meet tend to resemble Mr. Potato Head © dolls.



Two surgeries, one admission and several thousand dollars worth of insurance later, I was whole again. Well, actually, a tiny piece of me was missing, as the stone was finally removed.

You see, the moral of this story is; hospitals suck. That's right, no moral. A story without a moral you say? Like Billy Preston said, "Let the bad guy win every once in a while."

Oh, yes, gentle readers, it will indeed go round in circles. Now before you enter a hospital for your next visit, remember; someone will ask you to pee in a cup.