

Waleforth

Richard Hill

He was a revered consultant by the respiratory patients he had in his care. A man in his sixties, with silvery hair wearing a white coat, he spoke in a very erudite manner. He was always polite and professional towards the patients and his team. He smiled a lot and was always pleasant in the manner he conducted himself. He was a gentle man. Both patients and staff exalted him. He had been decorated with an OBE for his work and achievements.

Although he oversaw the respiratory unit and its' patients, he surprisingly smoked. However, the only place he could enjoy a cigarette in relative peace was in our technician's workshop. He would drop in three or four times a day to have a smoke.

On one occasion, he was being filmed by a film crew for a documentary programme about the current and future state of the NHS. One morning, he was 'shadowed' by the crew as he did his morning ward round. He had been fitted with a radio microphone. Wherever he went, they followed, taking in every conversation he had with his patients. After a couple of hours, he made the excuse of having to take a toilet break, and took himself off, not to the toilet, but to our workshop.

He didn't mince his words: "Those f**king film bods are a right pain." he said, lighting a cigarette. "Everywhere I go, they f**king follow." Such profanity seemed shocking and rare coming from the mouth of such a well-educated and cultured consultant.

What he didn't realise, as I pointed out to him, was that he was still wearing his radio mic and every word he uttered would have been heard by the film crew, or at the very least the sound recordist.

What a man.

-ENDS-

302 words