

FUNCTIONAL PARANOIA WITH OBSESSIVE – COMPULSIVE TENDENCIES

By **Burton Bumgarner**

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FUNCTIONAL PARANOIA WITH OBSESSIVE – COMPULSIVE TENDENCIES

A Ten Minute Comedy Skit-Play

By Burton Bumgarner

SYNOPSIS: Dr. Waverley is a psychiatrist with a big problem: her daughter, Little Natalie, drives her crazy. She returns to work after an “incident” which involved Little Natalie, the destruction of her office and her being prohibited from visiting the zoo. Dr. Waverley returns to work after a rehabilitation period and sees her first patient, a man with mild functional paranoia. But Little Natalie won’t leave Mommy alone. Soon Dr. Waverley begins to see her harmless patient as a mobster about to carry out a major crime, and the doctor evolves into a raving lunatic, inadvertently curing her patient.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 female, 1 male, 1 either; gender flexible)

DR. WAVERLEY (f)..... A psychiatrist. *(76 lines)*

DR. WILSON (m/f) A psychiatrist. *(27 lines)*

LITTLE NATALIE (f)..... Dr. Waverley’s daughter.
(28 lines)

MR. BENTON (m) A patient. *(42 lines)*

DURATION: 10 minutes

SETTING

The play may be performed on a stage with a sofa, loveseat or large comfortable chair center. Another comfortable chair is nearby. A box of Kleenex is on an end table. Or a backdrop of a wall and door in an upscale office.

PROPS

- Sofa or Loveseat
- Large Comfortable Chair
- Coffee Table or End Table
- Box of Kleenex
- Briefcase
- Filing Folder
- 2 Cell Phones
- Can of Lysol Spray
- Watch
- Purse
- Pen/Pencil
- Handy Wipe
- Notepad

SOUND EFFECTS: Phone ringing

COSTUMES

DR. WILSON and DR. WAVERLEY – Well-dressed professionals.

MR. BENTON – Wears jeans and t-shirt, or “sit around the house all day” clothes.

LITTLE NATALIE – Dressed like a 6-8 year old girl: dress or shorts.

AT RISE: DR. WILSON and DR. WAVERLEY enter left and cross right. DR. WILSON carries a folder. DR. WAVERLEY carries a briefcase. They sit in the chairs.

DR. WILSON: So you are ready to come back to work, Dr. Waverley?

DR. WAVERLEY: I'm positive! I can't wait to start.

DR. WILSON: I went to bat for you. I want to make sure everything will be alright.

DR. WAVERLEY: I know you did, Dr. Wilson. And I am so very grateful. I assure you. Everything will be great. I've hired a very experienced nanny to look after Little Natalie. This woman is highly qualified. She's taken care of some very challenging children in the past, and she assures me that she and Little Natalie will get along famously.

DR. WILSON: I certainly hope so.

DR. WAVERLEY: Her name is Mrs. Berringer. She and Little Natalie really seemed to hit it off this morning before I left. They have big plans today. They're going to start off with a trip to the zoo. Hopefully the people who work at the zoo won't remember Little Natalie from last year. You know. That business with the monkeys...when the entire primate house stopped eating...rinking...and even moving.

DR. WILSON: I remember.

DR. WAVERLEY: (*Admiring sofa.*) Say, we have new furniture. I like this chair.

DR. WILSON: After the episode last year there wasn't much left of the furniture.

DR. WAVERLEY: (*Meekly.*) I told you I was sorry. (*Looking around.*) I see you had the walls painted.

DR. WILSON: We had the walls replaced. You may recall the holes and the broken glass?

DR. WAVERLEY: (*Meekly.*) I'm sorry about that, too.

DR. WILSON: Very well. (*Looks at watch.*) Are you ready to get started?

DR. WAVERLEY: Ready and eager.

DR. WILSON: Good.

Hands DR. WAVERLEY the folder.

I'm giving you Mr. Benton. He has a mild case of functional paranoia. He fantasizes a bit and has some personality related idiosyncrasies and obsessive compulsive tendencies. He's been on a mild sedative for sleeping disorder and...

DR. WAVERLEY'S cell phone rings. LITTLE NATALIE enters downstage left. She is holding a cell phone to her ear. DR. WAVERLEY smiles uncomfortably at DR. WILSON, then stares at her purse. The phone rings several times.

...maybe you'd better answer that, Dr. Waverley.

DR. WAVERLEY: No, I'm okay. *(Continues to stare at the purse.)*

DR. WILSON: It's okay, Dr. Waverley.

DR. WAVERLEY: *(Slowly reaches in her briefcase and takes out her phone. Looking at the phone.)* It's Little Natalie.

DR. WILSON: I'm not surprised.

DR. WAVERLEY: I'm not going to answer it.

DR. WILSON: Maybe you should.

DR. WAVERLEY: No! I know what she's doing. She'll get me on the phone and then it will all start again. I told her Mommy can't be disturbed when she's with her patients.

DR. WILSON: Maybe you'd better tell her one more time.

DR. WAVERLEY: You're right. *(Answers the phone.)* Yes, dear. What is it?

LITTLE NATALIE: Mrs. Berringer told me a story.

DR. WAVERLEY: That's wonderful, dear.

LITTLE NATALIE: It was "Hansel and Gretel".

DR. WAVERLEY: That's a scary story. But we've read that story before.

LITTLE NATALIE: Not the way she tells it.

DR. WAVERLEY: How does Mrs. Berringer tell it?

LITTLE NATALIE: The witch eats Hansel and Gretel, and then she eats the woodcutter and his wife, and then she goes to town and eats all the children she can find. She said I'll be next. I'm scared, Mommy.

DR. WAVERLEY: Now, dear. I'm sure Mrs. Berringer didn't mean it. Are you ready to go to the zoo?

LITTLE NATALIE: I don't think we're going. Mrs. Berringer is sitting in the hot tub eating bagels.

DR. WAVERLEY: Maybe she needs to relax a bit before she takes you to the zoo. Listen, dear. I've got to go. Be a good girl for Mrs. Berringer.

LITTLE NATALIE: She said after she finishes the bagels she's going chop off my teddy bear's head with a butcher knife and scatter the stuffing all over the house.

DR. WAVERLEY: (*Sighs.*) Mommy's got to go. I'll see you this afternoon. Bye.

Hangs up the phone. LITTLE NATALIE shrugs her shoulders and exits.

Sorry.

DR. WILSON: (*Looking in folder.*) Anyway, Mr. Benton has no dangerous or self-destructive history.

DR. WAVERLEY: I'm looking forward to meeting him.

DR. WILSON: Remember, Dr. Waverley. You have to give your patient your full and undivided attention.

DR. WAVERLEY: I am ready to go to work.

DR. WILSON exits. DR. WAVERLEY looks at her cell phone, then places it on the coffee table. She sits and reads the folder on MR. BENTON. DR. WILSON and MR. BENTON enter and cross to DR. WAVERLEY. MR. BENTON carries a can of Lysol.

DR. WILSON: Mr. Benton, this is Dr. Waverley. She'll be talking with you today.

She holds out her hand. Benton stares at it.

DR. WAVERLEY: Mr. Benton.

DR. WILSON: (*Stage whisper to DR. WAVERLEY.*) Afraid of germs. Won't shake hands.

DR. WAVERLEY: Sorry. (*Indicates the sofa.*) Have a seat, Mr. Benton.

MR. BENTON takes a handy wipe from his pocket, unwraps it, and cleans off the chair. He then sprays the sofa with Lysol.

MR. BENTON: This thing is not only tacky, it's crawling with germs. I hate germs.

DR. WILSON exits. MR. BENTON sits. DR. WAVERLEY takes her note pad.

DR. WAVERLEY: What would you like to talk about, Mr. Benton?

MR. BENTON: The world is such a dirty place. Germs everywhere.

DR. WAVERLEY: And these germs bother you?

MR. BENTON: Of course they bother me! They make me sick!

DR. WAVERLEY: Are you sick today?

MR. BENTON: Of course not. I have my disinfectant spray.

DR. WAVERLEY: I see from your records that you used to work for a meat processing plant.

MR. BENTON: Filthy work! I don't want to talk about it!

DR. WAVERLEY: After that you worked as a plumber's assistant.

MR. BENTON: Horrible work! Germs everywhere! I don't want to talk about it!

DR. WAVERLEY: After that you worked as a parking garage attendant.

MR. BENTON: Disgusting work! Dirty air! I don't want to talk about it.

DR. WAVERLEY: What would you like to talk about, Mr. Benton?

MR. BENTON: *(Leans back, facing away from DR. WAVERLEY.)* I talked with Dr. Wilson about my fear of germs. She told me to avoid dirty places, which limited my career choices.

DR. WAVERLEY begins to eye her cell phone. She picks it up and caresses it.

The world is such a dirty place. Anyway, I realized the only way I could ever obtain gainful employment was by working out of my home. Which is what I do. I buy and sell things, which is great for me because I never actually have to handle the things I buy and sell.

DR. WAVERLEY: *(Becoming distracted.)* What kind of things do you buy and sell, Mr. Benton?

MR. BENTON: The usual. Chain saws, outboard motors, fishing equipment, hunting dogs,

DR. WAVERLEY takes her phone and sneaks downstage right. MR. BENTON doesn't notice.

rare books, common books, used computers, new computers, real estate in the Canadian wilderness, cars, trucks...

DR. WAVERLEY crosses downstage right dials on her phone. LITTLE NATALIE enters left with her cell phone.

LITTLE NATALIE: Hello?

DR. WAVERLEY: Hello, Little Natalie. How are things going with Mrs. Berringer?

LITTLE NATALIE: Mom? *(Suddenly frantic,)* Mrs. Berringer locked me in the broom closet! She's going through your jewelry!

DR. WAVERLEY: Are you telling Mommy the truth?

LITTLE NATALIE: Of course I am! I wouldn't tell a fib!

DR. WAVERLEY and LITTLE NATALIE turn and face upstage. MR. BENTON continues to talk.

MR. BENTON: Dr. Wilson really wanted to hear about my dreams. See, I've been having really strange dreams. It's probably stress related. My computer keys get really dirty sometimes, and one night, when I was in the middle of a big transaction involving a 1967 Cadillac Coup de Ville and a waffle iron, I ran out of Lysol.

LITTLE NATALIE: *(Turns and faces downstage.)* The police were here. They asked if I knew anything about a woman who strangles people with her bare hands. It sounded like Mrs. Berringer. *(Turns upstage.)*

MR. BENTON: Thanks to a lousy can of disinfectant spray, I ended up with a car big enough to hold a swimming pool. Of course, I never use swimming pools. Too many germs.

DR. WAVERLEY: *(Turns and faces downstage.)* Now listen here, young lady! I do NOT believe a word you're saying! We talked about this! I have to work!

She sneaks back to the chair and sits, unnoticed by MR. BENTON.

MR. BENTON: So I'm stuck with this big moose of a car, and I start having these dreams. (*Tough Brooklyn accent.*) I'm driving in the car, and all of a sudden these guys are in the car with me. And they've got strange names...like Benny the Banana, and Enrico the Enforcer.

MR. BENTON looks back at DR. WAVERLEY, who tries to reconnect with what MR. BENTON is saying.

DR. WAVERLEY: Go on, Mr. Benton. I'm listening.

MR. BENTON: Okay. So anyway, I'm driving these guys downtown. We're old friends, talking and everything. We stop at Leo's Little Italy for some lasagna and garlic toast. Then we get back in the car. We're talking and laughing. Then, all of a sudden my cell phone goes off.

DR. WAVERLEY'S cell phone rings.

DR. WAVERLEY: Keep talking, Mr. Benton. (*Takes the phone and sneaks downstage right.*) Little Natalie! Stop calling me!

LITTLE NATALIE: (*Faces downstage.*) I just wanted to tell you we're leaving for the zoo.

DR. WAVERLEY: I'm glad to hear that. Fresh air is good for you.

LITTLE NATALIE: It's the zoo, Mommy. The air isn't all that fresh.

MR. BENTON: Then Benny says it's time to go to work. And I say, work? What work? And he says we're going over to Big Louie's Bar and whack Big Louie.

DR. WAVERLEY: Are you and Mrs. Berringer getting along?

LITTLE NATALIE: Not really. She made me eat cat food and I got sick on my stomach.

DR. WAVERLEY: We don't have a cat.

LITTLE NATALIE: Mrs. Berringer brought her cat. His name is Jack the Ripper, because he rips up things. He's already ripped up the curtains in the living room.

DR. WAVERLEY: We've talked about telling the truth, dear.

LITTLE NATALIE: It's true! Jack the Ripper scratched my arms. They're bleeding real bad.

MR. BENTON: I don't know anybody named Big Louie and I'd never go in a bar. Too many germs. Off I drive. Benny and Enrico are laughing and telling stories and breathing garlic breath all over the place. I would have paid a fortune for a pack of Tick Tacks.

LITTLE NATALIE: The cat hates me, Mommy!

DR. WAVERLEY: I need to get back to work, dear.

LITTLE NATALIE: You don't love me!

DR. WAVERLEY: You know I love you. Mommy's going back to work.

DR. WAVERLEY sighs, hangs up her phone and sneaks back to the chair. LITTLE NATALIE faces upstage.

MR. BENTON: So we pull up to this place, and sure enough, the sign says Big Louie's Bar. (*Looks back at DR. WAVERLEY.*) Are you still there, Doc?

DR. WAVERLEY: (*Trying to refocus.*) Yes, Mr. Benton. Big Louie's Bar. Please keep going.

MR. BENTON: Me and Enrico and Benny goes in the place.

DR. WAVERLEY: Benny and Enrico?

MR. BENTON: Yeah. Benny the Banana and Enrico the Enforcer. The guys in the car.

DR. WAVERLEY: (*Not connecting.*) The car?

MR. BENTON: The big Caddie outside Big Louie's Bar.

DR. WAVERLEY: (*Trying to focus.*) Uh...of course. (*Takes notes.*)

MR. BENTON: So Enrico says "hey, Big Louie. We wants you to go for a little ride. And Louie says "yeah? And what if I prefer public transportation?" and Benny says "we got a special deal on one way trips to the river!" And Benny and Enrico shove Big Louie into the caddie.

DR. WAVERLEY: (*Becoming alarmed.*) And then what did you do?

MR. BENTON: I drove to the river. Enrico stuck Big Louie's feet in a bucket of wet cement and sent out for Chinese food. We ate sweet and sour shrimp while the cement dried. I offered Big Louie a fortune cookie. It said, you will take a trip on a body of water. Sounded good to us. So we dropped him in the water, along with the take out bags.

LITTLE NATALIE faces the audience and dials on her cell phone.

DR. WAVERLEY: (*More alarmed.*) So you're saying...

MR. BENTON: We're guilty of whacking Big Louie AND tossing litter in the river. I don't know which is worse.

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