

# Medical Divorce

written by

Scott Danzig

[scott@sneakyghost.com](mailto:scott@sneakyghost.com)

INT. HOME - DAY

Travel pictures propped up on a mahogany chest showcase a couple enjoying life, leading up to a wedding portrait labeled "Noah + Barbara".

BARBARA, 70, pushes a phone against her white curly hair as she paces about in her black dress, trying to express herself as she fiddles with her front door's handle.

BARBARA  
Michael, the lot fills up quickly.  
Michael. Michael. Try to park in  
front of the bagel shop, Michael.

In the living room, NOAH, 73, balances loose suspenders while finagling with his tie, his attention instead fixed on the TV weather forecast.

BARBARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Will Anna be there?  
(voice goes unsteady)  
Michael, I have to go. Love you.

Noah's face strains as Barbara suffers a fit of coughing.

NOAH  
Hey Barb? You okay?

The claps of heeled shoes approaches.

BARBARA  
You should worry more about that  
tie. Let me get it. Just stop.  
Stop!

Noah relents, staring upward as Barbara takes over.

NOAH  
Danny always seemed like a hermit.  
He should have found someone.

BARBARA  
He probably didn't want to share a  
bathroom. Ah, there we go.

Barbara tightens the tie knot.

NOAH  
Nah, ya just need strong bladder.

BARBARA  
Or a diaper! HA!

The two share a laugh, until Barbara's coughing returns. Noah's smile falters. He reaches for his black suit jacket and his hand finds a sleeve.

NOAH

You don't sound too good. I'll schedule another appointment.

BARBARA

We have lousy insurance, Noah. We can't afford the deductible, and it's not that bad.

Barbara cuts off his objection.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Now c'mon, we're going to be late. Don't forget your yarmulka.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Clouds drearily hang over a small gathering amidst headstones decorated with faded Hebrew and six-pointed stars. The drone of the rabbi's prayers is occasionally punctuated with an "Amen".

Noah and Barbara take their place behind the stocky, visibly uncomfortable MICHAEL, 42, and the wide-eyed, taller HANNAH, 48. Barbara leans over Michael's shoulder and they whisper.

BARBARA

What happened to Anna?

MICHAEL

We broke up.

Hannah turns and whispers a greeting

HANNAH

Hi, I'm Hannah.

BARBARA

No, you're not Anna.

HANNAH

I'm *Hannah*.

A nearby attendee makes a "shhhh" sound, but backs away when Barbara's coughing reemerges fiercely enough to interrupt the ceremony. Noah glares as he moves to support her. He waves off a concerned Michael and guides her away.

Michael and Hannah continue to watch, but Noah continues to wave off their concern from a distance. Michael touches Hannah's arm and they turn back toward the ceremony.

Barbara calms and pulls her hand away, revealing a spatter of blood on her fingers.

NOAH

I don't care about the money. We're going to a hospital.

Another couple from the funeral, SAMUEL, 65 and RACHEL, 60 approach, having followed the two in mutual concern.

BARBARA

I'm sure it'll get better. I don't want us to lose the house over a cough.

NOAH

I don't give a damn about the house, Barb.

BARBARA

Well I do. It's like they actually want us to get divorced. Then Medicaid would kick in.

RACHEL

That's what we did.

Barbara and Noah turn around, startled.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Sorry, we wanted to make sure you were okay.

BARBARA

Thanks for checking, but it's just a cough.

She notices Rachel eyeing the blood on her hand and hides it.

SAMUEL

Divorce doesn't have to change your life, you know, other than that sweet, sweet Medicaid.

RACHEL

I can refer you to the attorney we used. He offered us a commission.

Noah darkens and confronts the two.

NOAH

I don't give a crap about your profiteering. We ain't ending our fifty year marriage over some medical bills!

Barbara moves to take Noah's hand, but he only sees red.

NOAH (CONT'D)

That's what this asinine world has come to. This country is run by idiots who think...

BARBARA

What's the process like?

Noah does a double-take as Rachel realizes she's been asked a question.

RACHEL

Oh, well, it's all done in one appointment. He's even offering a package deal if you'd also like to refinance your mortgage or update your will.

BARBARA

Oh, our house is paid off, but  
(beat)  
It would be nice if Michael's inheritance was better protected from this new Anna. I'd like to put it all in a trust for grandkids, but that's never going to happen since he likes older women.

Barbara finds Noah's unmoving eyes as Rachel slips a business card into her purse.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Look, Noah-- I don't want to leave you with nothing. It's the only answer we have!

Noah slowly shakes his head and scoffs as he pulls away. Barbara leans to follow, but succumbs to more coughing. Noah hurries back to hold her, his iciness met with Samuel and Rachel's acquiescence.

NOAH

I am not giving up my wife for money.

As Barbara calms, Noah points at Michael.

NOAH (CONT'D)  
What would our son think?

BARBARA  
He doesn't have to know! No one  
does. And you'll have a home. It's  
just paperwork!

NOAH  
No, it's nonsense.

Noah shakes his head dismissively and tries to lead Barbara  
to the car. Barbara plants her feet and steels her voice.

BARBARA  
We're going to do this.

Noah eyes linger on his wedding band, long and hard, then up  
at Barbara.

NOAH  
50 years...

Noah blinks his eyes, his lips tightening.

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Remember that song at our wedding?

BARBARA  
You mean-- that song? Of course.

NOAH  
That was the only time I serenaded  
you.

Noah's nostrils flare as he inhales sharply, then exhales  
slowly. Another deep breath, and an exhale. And again, still  
wrought with nerves, he sings.

NOAH (CONT'D)  
I love you like a bumblebee loves  
honey...

I love you like a panda loves  
bamboo...

Noah covers his mouth to calm himself. Barbara softens. Noah  
reluctantly drops his hand.

NOAH (CONT'D)  
I will love you and hope you find  
me funny...  
(MORE)

NOAH (CONT'D)  
(voice cracking)  
Let's have our honeymoon in Malibu.

Noah's knees give out and he sits on the ground, sobbing.  
Barbara rushes to hold him, soothing him gently.

BARBARA  
It'll be okay. It'll be okay. It  
will be okay.

Barbara leans her head on Noah's shoulder.

BARBARA (CONT'D)  
Well, maybe not your singing.

They burst out laughing, long and hard, both crying, but now  
with happiness.

NOAH  
One question?

Barbara nods.

BARBARA  
Anything.

NOAH  
Does this mean I can see other  
women?

FADE OUT.