

# The Schmooze

## Stories with a Yiddish Twist

### DID YOU SEE THAT BELLY BUTTON (“PUIK”)? RECORDING CONVERSATIONS IN THE OPERATING ROOM

Note: The Yiddish words for “operating room” are “apereyting tsimer.”

by

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**Syosset, New York**

Sam Hoffman (“Old Jews Telling Jokes”) wrote, “Jews have a complicated relationship with doctors. Most of us had mothers who wanted us to be doctors, so it’s natural that we hate the people who lived up to our mother’s expectations when we, obviously did not. On the plus side, doctors are required by their profession to listen, pay attention, and nod their heads thoughtfully when we kvetch--so, in that respect, we find them very useful.”

In law, frivolous litigation is the practice of starting or carrying on lawsuits that, due to their lack of legal merit, have little or no chance of being won.

Today we’ve got robotic surgery. Meet da Vinci. The downside of robots in the operating room? A lack of tactile feel-- surgeons who sit at a console a few feet from the patient. And, yes, there’s even a website (“vebzaytl”) named “badrobotsurgery.com.” They are committed to helping victims of robot (“goilem”) surgery receive the medical care and compensation they deserve.

Who can forget (“fargesn”) the case of the woman who spilled scalding coffee (“kave”) on her lap and successfully sued McDonald’s.

And then there have been burglars suing homeowners after injuring themselves during a robbery. (Note: The Yiddish words for “robber” are “ganef” or “gazlen.”)

In May 2003, Stephen Joseph of San Francisco, sued Kraft foods for putting trans-fat in their Oreo cookies. He wanted Kraft to stop selling Oreos to children (“kinder”). When the media blitz became too much for him to handle, he decided to drop the suit.

Recently, Ethel Easter told Good Morning America that she is considering suing Harris Healthcare in Houston, Texas. During surgery, she hid a recorder in her hair extensions and recorded the conversation (“shmu’es”) that took place in the operating room.

According to Easter, an African American, she was called “a handful.” [She apparently threatened them with legal action after they didn’t schedule her for an appointment soon enough.] Easter said that someone made a crack while referencing the movie, “Precious.” The person said, “This is Precious over here saying hi to Precious over there.” She felt that she was subjected to racial profiling.

In another suit, a man accidentally left his iPhone recording during a colonoscopy and caught the anesthesiologist saying she’d like to punch him--give him a “zets.” Jokes were made about his having syphilis. Another surgeon said, “They [patients] want to believe what they want to believe. These people are into their medical problems. Round and round we go, whirl of annoying patients we go. Where it’ll land, nobody knows.” A jury (“zhuri”) awarded him \$500,000 in 2015.

On a less serious note, Molly Katz (“Jewish as a Second Language, Second Schmear”) wrote about 9 things doctors say only to Jews:

(Note: The Yiddish words have been added by Marjorie Wolfe).

1. “You have the worst sinus infection I’ve ever treated.”  
(Note: The Yiddish word for “infection” is “infektsye.” A “sinus” is a “kholel.”)
2. “Thank God you got Sam to the hospital in time. Twenty seconds more and his colon would have exploded.”  
(Note: The Yiddish words meaning “thank God” are “Danken Got!” or “Got tsu danken!”)
3. “Rest, Barbara. Don’t lift a finger, or you’ll need massive surgery.”  
(Note: The Yiddish word meaning “to rest” is “oprue.”)
4. “Phyllis, your fibroid is the size of a cantaloupe. (Note: The Yiddish word for “cantaloupe” is “dinke.”)
5. “Do you want to live, Norman? Then never go near another shrimp.”

(The Yiddish word for “shrimp” is “rakl.”)

6. “Howard’s heart stopped twenty-three times during his prostate surgery.”
7. “Would you rather die in a hospital or at home? Because if you don’t eat your bran, you can take your choice.”
8. “On my children’s lives, I’ve never seen a swollen toe this big.”  
(The Yiddish word for “swollen” is “geshvoln.” A “toe” is “der finger fun fus.”) Are we talking about “gout” -- “the disease of kings” or the “rich man’s disease”?
9. “Arlene, you were ten seconds from death.”

MARJORIE WOLFE recommends Molly Katz’s book, “Jewish as a Second Language - Second Schmeer.” It’s \$8.95 from Workman Publishing.

### Search for Stories Beginning with the Letter

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>N</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>Q</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>W</u>		<u>Y</u>	<u>Z</u>

**Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books:**



**"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and "Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction? Yiddish Trivia." To order a copy, go to her website: [MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com](http://MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com)**

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