

# Final SCRIPT WITH MOVEMENTS

## Wealth is Health

A Medical Cabaret for our Times

Written by

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## The Characters

**The MC:** dressed in striped shirt, sleeves rolled up, waistcoat and bow tie.

**The Chorus:** Dressed in a range of colours, ideally each person has a different colour - one person all in purple, another in blue etc. At times they all wear hospital gowns. They sing and dance. Other characters are all played by chorus members.

**The Baddie:** a silent movie style baddie, dressed all in black with a top hat and drawn on moustache, who wealds scissors to make cuts and steals around the stage. Doesn't speak.

**Madame Magique:** a psychic dressed in evening gown and long flowing shawl. Possibly Russian. Must be able to do a deep Welsh accent.

**Doctors:** larger than life, consultant types.

**Nurse:** lower status than the doctor but knows what's right.

**Minister:** highly groomed, Eton type.

**Lobbyist:** down to earth, sincere.

**A Patient:** delivers a joke opener

**Newsreader:** Radio 4

**News venders x 4:** loud, city criers

## Scene One: Welcome to Health Inequality!

*An empty stage.*

*Cue A drum roll and a cymbal clash. The intro music for Roll out the Barrel kicks in. MC greeting audience, baddie observing. MC makes her way up centre aisle.*

*CUE: MC blows whistle cut music*

M.C. Welcome ladies and gentlemen! Welcome one and all!

Cue: cut Music backin

June and Alma enter from audience, begin to give out balloons.

*CUE: MC blows whistle cut music .*

M.C. Good afternoon. ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the wonderful world of horrendous health inequality! You will be astounded, amazed, outraged by the scale of injustice you'll witness. But we hope incited, inspired, and energized to do something about it!

*CUE: Cut Music back in*

Linda enters Stage Right and Pat and Margaret Stage Left. All begin to Juggle, Baddie steals balloons from audience members and is chased off by June and Alma. Maggie enters stage right followed by Keith with syringe. Maggie bends to pick up imaginary object and Keith syringes her bottom. Maggie takes syringe from Keith and chases him off with it stage right.

*CUE: MC blows whistle cut music*

M.C.            We live in a country where the rich have 19 more years of healthy life than the poor. Where health inequality is the worst it's been since records began.

CUE:            Cut Music back in

Mc calls everyone to seats *Baddie exits stage right*

CUE:    *When all in position FADE OUT music*

M.C.            Now sit back and enjoy the show! Let us take you on a roller-coaster ride of health inequality!!!!

*Music begins Roll Out the barrel chair chorus dance. At end of dance music cuts and all begin singing*

*led by MC*

All            We've quite a story  
Fun packed and madcap as hell.  
Health inequality  
You won't be feeling so well.  
Infant mortality  
Early death, increased disease.  
NHS in bits around us  
It's time for action, please!

Mc TO Stage right OF CHORUS LINE

M.C.            [*As puppet 1*] I say, I say, I say, what did the Scouser say to the London businessman?

[Puppet 2 - different voice] I don't know, what did the Scouser say to the London businessman?

[As puppet 1] How come you live nine years longer than me?

*Drum/cymbal crash and M.C. responds to imagined rapturous applause.*

*Chorus sing song again in whisper. MC WALKS BEHIND THEM Stage Right to Stage Left.*

All            We've quite a story  
                  Fun packed and madcap as hell.  
                  Health inequality  
                  You won't be feeling so well  
                  Infant mortality  
                  Early death, increased disease  
                  NHS in bits around us  
                  It's time for action, please!

*Stage Left.*

M.C.            [As puppet 1] I say, I say, I say, How do you stop fourteen hundred English kids dying every year?

[Puppet 2] I don't know, how do you stop fourteen hundred English kids dying every year?

[As puppet 1] Eradicate child poverty!

*Drum/cymbal crash and moment of appreciation for imagined applause from M.C.*

*The chorus kick back in for one last rousing repeat of the song.*

All            We've quite a story  
                  Fun packed and madcap as hell.  
                  Health inequality  
                  You won't be feeling so well  
                  Infant mortality  
                  Early death, increased disease

NHS in bits around us  
It's time for action, please!

*CUE: As song finishes bring in opening music*

MC thanks dancers. Chorus exit from ends of row, Linda and Pat first, Maggie and Margaret, Then Alma and June, the Keith. MC STAYS UNTIL ALL ARE GONE, WAVES AND EXITS.

MC A final goodbye line

CUE: Fade out music

## Scene Two: News Just In: NHS in Crisis

*Magaret stands up*

Newsreader News Just In. NHS in crisis.

*Cue: silent movie style baddie music begins to play low under the following*

*Alma entres stage left and stands centre behind chairs.*

News 1 Biggest shake up of NHS since it's foundation

Keith entres Stage Right.

News 2 NHS short 20,000 nurses.

Maggie entres Stage Right behind the chairs.

News 3            10% cash cuts to hospitals

Margaret enters stage left behind the chairs

News 4            8,000 hospital beds cut in three years.

All begin to repeat their headlines. Baddie enters stage right and begins to steal papers one by one. He steals Margarets last of all, Margaret chases him, and returns to her seat. Baddie exits stage right.

Maggie enters Stage right, calls Keith and Alma to take off one chair stage right, Maggie takes off two, then returns for third, then returns and turns the other three around. Alma and Keith finally get first chair off and return to look confused. Maggie sends them off and all exit to chairs.

CUE:                Fade out silent movie music. Fade up heart beat

*A doctor entres Stage left and nurse entres Stage Right. Doctor mimes putting on surgical gloves. Nurse bends down to look at patients face SR of bench.*

Nurse              The patient is very sick doctor. In early stage terminal decline. Lost a lot of blood.

Doctor             Well nurse, lets see what we can do to ease the patient's suffering.

*The Doctor mimes taking a pair of surgical tongs from her/his pocket and displays them exaggeratedly to the audience. As s/he is doing this, the baddie creeps across the stage, this time carrying a sack with a £ sign on it.*

Nurse              The recommended treatment here is a large injection of cash.

Doctor             No nurse I intend a different course of treatment. I'll relieve the patient of its burden to ease the pressure. Lets start with eye operations.

*The doctor mimes removing something from the patient and flinging it behind him, the Baddie mimes catching it in her/his sack - this is repeated for all the subsequent items.*

Doctor             Now lets take ambulances away.

Doctor moves to feet of patient and pulls off their feet.

Nurse            Doctor I strongly advise against this course of treatment.

Doctor            Now the coag clinics.

Doctor mimes dismantling drip.

Nurse            But doctor, with the services you remove the money. You're taking the life blood from the patient.

Doctor            (*ignoring her*) Hips and knee ops next.

Doctor mimes going into cupboard under bench and bringing out a hammer. Doctor bashes knees in.

Nurse            But Doctor there was a 500% increase in privatized services last year, at this rate there'll be nothing left of the patient

Doctor            How about the heart? Yes, I think so.

Doctor once again goes into cupboard and brings out a large knife, cuts down patients chest and pulls open rib cage. Then reaches in and pulls out the heart.

*CUE:*            *Cut heart beat bring in flat line sound*

Doctor            Success!

Doctor exits.

Baddie taunts nurse with bag of NHS goodies, June chases him round table and exits Stage right

Cue Fade out flat line and fade up Silent Movie music



Maggie, Alma and Keith enter, Maggie directs Alma and Keith to pick up a chair, Maggie picks up two and exits stage right. Alma and Keith use whole stage to exit with chair.

Cue fade out Silent Movie Music

*The M.C. and a Patient enter the stage from opposite sides of the screens. Patient walks towards M.C., who ignores the Patient.*

Cue Silent Music music

Alma entres

News 1            New Health and Social Care Act says all new services to be put out for private tender

Keith entres

News 2            In first six months only 4 out of 24 clinical contracts went to NHS providers.

Maggie Enters

News 3            Chair of BMA says, "Reduction in resources leaves NHS fraying round the edges"

Margaret entres

News 4            First privatized hospital placed in special measures. Provider walks away.

All repeat their headlines as they walk around space and exit.

*Cue:                Music kicks up as they exit, then fades out*

Patient            Doctor Doctor, people keep ignoring me

M.C.                Next!

*Newsreader enters Stage Left*

Newsreader     And now over to the Minister.

Minister enters from audience Stage Right

MINISTER: It's an issue of personal responsibility. The NHS just can't cope with the burden. First we need to relieve it of the strain and allow the private sector to step in. Then, where people persist in activities which are harmful to health they should be expected to contribute to the cost of their own health care. They're abusing themselves with bad lifestyle decisions, and placing a burden on the hard working tax payers!

*Minister exits stage Right.*

*MC enters and announces scene 3*

Pat, Alma and June place themselves behind screen

## Scene Three: The Dark Shadow of Risky Behaviour

*CUE: Music baby elephant and shadow/floor light.*

*Shadow play Alma steps forward smoking oversized cigarettes stage right, Pat centre steps forward mimes eating chips; ; June enters Stage left drinking from oversized glass.*

*Cue: Fade out music and light.*

*Alma, June and Pat exit, Linda enters behind screen*

Lobbyist        But it's not actually like that is it?

*CUE: Music baby elephant distorted and light*

*Linda centre desperately drinking too much and chain smoking.*

*CUE: Fade out music and light*

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*Lobbyist enters stage right*

Lobbyist        All the research tells us that the only way to tackle Health Inequality is to address the social determinants of health: what are the root causes of the problems? Why do people smoke or drink too much? You don't make those decisions in a vacuum; your decisions are shaped by all your social circumstances.

*Newsreader enters stage left and tries to stand in front of lobbyist.*

Newsreader    Yes, thank you...

Lobbyist        The Marmot report, the Kingsfund research...they all say to tackle health inequality you have to tackle wider inequality. We have the greatest income inequality since records began. A quarter of our children are living in poverty...

Newsreader    [*interrupts*] Thank you, yes, thank you. Sounds far too radical and complicated for a sound bite. [*composed to audience*] And moving on...

*Both exit .*

*MC Introduces scene four.*

*CUE:            Music Oh I do Like to be Beside The Seaside*

## Scene Four: The Social Determinants

*CUE: Fade out music when all on stage.*

*M.C. And now ladies and gentlemen, we've a little medley for you, feel free to sing along....*

*Music cuts out and the group sings unaccompanied to the tune of Oh I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside*

Group 1        We'd like to talk a little bit about our health now  
                  What makes us who and how we are  
                  What are the causes of our ills, ills, ills  
                  Why do we need to take so many pills, pills, pills  
                  It's not just our age and sex and gene pool  
                  Wider social forces are at play  
                  Where we work and what we do  
                  Where we're born and go to school  
                  Our wealth and prospects, all have a say.

*Next to the tune of Daisy Bell*

Group 2        Daisy Daisy you're really looking rough  
                  How it ages you, living a life that's tough  
                  The stress always making ends meet  
                  Uncertainty and panic  
                  At twenty four you look much more  
                  And have smoked since the age of four!

*This to the tune of Any Old Iron*

Group 1        Any old facts, any old facts  
                  Any any any old facts  
                  Research shows  
                  Don't you know  
                  There's more poor health the further down the scale you go  
                  Those on top  
                  With all the dosh  
                  And the fresh air, good food lifestyles

Much healthier than you

They live longer too

That's fact

It's fact.

*And this to the tune of Knees up Mother Brown*

Group 2        Knees up Mother Brown, Knees up Mother Brown

Best keep fit or else you know

Onto the scrap heap you will go

Never mind your hips dear - worked right to the bone

Born on the breadline

Dead before your pension

Care fees cost your home.

*Following is to the tune of Lets All Go Down To The Strand*

Group 1        We hope that you can see

Group 2        Social Determinants

Group 1        It's not just down to you and me

We can't choose where we're born or how we're raised

Group 2        Social Determinants from birth until the grave

Group 1        Education and Family

Group 2        Food shops and space that's green

All              Jobs, pollution, houses too

All have health affects on you

We do hope that you agree.

*Cue we do like to be beside seaside- all disperse to chairs apart from MC*

M.C.            Well ladies and gentlemen, I do hope you're enjoying the show! Just to recap, in case you nodded off for a minute, or were chatting to your neighbour, what we've said so far is this...Health Inequality in England is

dreadful. Worst it's ever been. Some blame individuals for making 'bad lifestyle choices'. Some say not everyone has the same choices. That it's part of the bigger picture of poverty and inequality in England.

And then we said that the NHS was on its last legs. But it's not because of people's bad lifestyle choices, or because it's incompetent. It's because more people are living longer and we're not investing enough in it to meet the need. And the more we give from the NHS budget into the private sector, the less there is in the NHS and the less it can do.

So, now you've caught up - if you're not asleep again - we'll get on with the show. I'd like to welcome to the stage now the mysterious, the magnificent, the mellifluous Madame Miraque.

*Drum roll and cymbal clash as Madame Miraque appears.*

*Cue Madame Miraque music*

## Scene Five: Madame Miraque

*The M.C. stays on stage as Madame Miraque walks to the front.*

Madame M      The presence is strong tonight ladies and gentlemen. I feel someone trying to get through. [*she is writhing a little, waving her arms, closing her eyes, feeling the spirit come to her!*] Yes, yes!

*She convulses as if letting the spirit into her body. Heightened, exaggerated, funny. She speaks next in a deep voice with a Welsh accent, taking on the mannerisms of a man - Nye Bevin in fact.*

Madame M      When we organized the National Health Service we had two principles underlining it: that the medical arts of science and healing should be made available to people when they needed them irrespective of whether they could pay for them or not. And that this should be done not at the expense of the poorer members of the community, but of the well to do. And we did it even when Winston Churchill said we were a bankrupt nation!

*Madame Miraque convulses again as the spirit leaves her. She is overcome with exhaustion, arm to head, and begins to drop as the M.C. races on from backstage and catches her just in time.*

M.C.            She is overcome ladies and gentlemen! It takes a great deal out of her to host the spirits. And such an auspicious one tonight as Nye Bevin!

But on with the show!

*S/he exit's assisting Madame Miraque.*

CUE: CROSS FADE MADAME MIRAQUE MUSIC INTO Silent Music

*Maggie and Keith entre, Maggie exits stage right and passes Keith 3 chairs one by one. Keith builds sculpture, Maggie enters, looks at sculpture, is annoyed. Instructs Keith to hold structure while she dismantles it and puts the three chairs in a line facing upstage. Keith exits, she looks at audience exasperated. Maggie INTRODUCES SCENE and exits to seat.*

CUE: CROSS FADE MUSIC WITH flat line heart monitor sound

## Scene Six: The NHS Revived!

*Shortly after the nurse and doctor enter the baddie comes back carrying his sack.*

Nurse Do you think we might revive the patient doctor? There are signs of life.

Doctor 2 *[looking inside the body on the imagined operating table]* Hardly surprising that the patient is in terminal decline nurse, many of the vital organs are missing.

Nurse Is it too late?

Doctor 2 Not for the treatment I propose, but we must act fast.

*The doctor and nurse spin around quickly and catch the baddie unawares. Nurse grabs sack and pushes baddie to doctor, doctor knees baddie, spins him round, pushes him off stage right, nurse hits him with sack to help him on his way.*

Doctor 2 Give me the eye operations nurse

*She takes an imaginary something out of the bag and throws it to the doctor who mimes catching it and putting it back in the body*

Doctor 2 And the ambulances. Thanks nurse. Now the Coag clinics. And the Hip and knee ops. Now last but by no means least, the heart nurse.

*As the doctor drops the imagined heart into the body they wait expectantly*

Doctor 2            Ah, of course! The final stage of the treatment. To combat the blood loss. A large injection of cash is what's needed. The patient has been trying to do more on less for far too long. Bound to wear you down!

*The nurse mimes injecting the patient.*

*CUE: Fade out flat line sound and bring in Heart beat*

Nurse/Dr 2        *(Triumphant) Success!*

Nurse and Doctor exit.

Cue                cross fade heartbeat into silent movie music

Maggie and Keith enter, Keith watches while Maggie turns left chair around to face audience, then middle chair, whilst Maggie turns right chair around Keith turns left chair back to face upstage. Maggie stands back to look at her work and sees Keith pulling middle chair upstage in preparation to turn, they grapple over chair, Maggie wins, gets rid of Keith and completes job of turning all chairs to face audience. Maggie exits.

CUE                Fade out silent movie music

As MC begins to talk all the chorus entre the stage for final song.

*M.C.                Well ladies and gentlemen, our show's almost over. Thank you for being such a marvelous audience, it's been a pleasure. Just a quickie to leave you with now before our closing song ....Man walks into the doctors. 'Doctor', he says, 'every time I have a cuppa tea I get an awful stabbing pain in me eye'. Doctor says, 'have you tried taking the teaspoon out sir'?! [Drum/cymbal clash.]*



## Scene Seven: The Health Inequality Internationale Finale

*The company have gathered and sing straight out to the audience, to the tune of the Internationale*

All                    Blame not the poor when they are ailing  
                          Rather first explore the cause.  
                          Root out the seeds of the injustice  
                          Sow the fresh new seeds of health and hope  
                          Improve the lives of everybody  
                          Not just of the privileged few.  
                          We need equality and fair life chances  
                          We must dream a world that's new.  
                          It's not fair that the rich live much longer, healthier lives  
                          And what help there has been, is stripped before our eyes  
                          So come brothers and sisters national welfare is at stake  
                          Protect our ailing citizens, before it is too late.

*CUE: Fairground music as all exit*

*END*