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## **SPERM COUNTS**

**By David Lohrey**

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

NURSE: Young woman in nurse's uniform.

MR. ORONA: 40ish. Quiet, shy man in tweed jacket and thick glasses.

MR. CURTIS: Dynamic, thirty-something middle-management type.

MR. KALINSKY: Bearish Russian with thick accent. In distinctive Russian attire, with continental flair.

SETTING: Fertility clinic/Sperm bank off Wilshire Boulevard in downtown Los Angeles.

TIME: Mid-afternoon. The Present.

At Rise: NURSE is at desk, on phone.

(A man comes in shyly and stands back awkwardly)

MR. ORONA

I'm, uh, here because...I believe I have an appointment.

NURSE

You must be my three o'clock. It's Mr. Arena, isn't it?

ORONA

Orona.

NURSE

Aroma?

ORONA

O-ro-na. Glen Orona.

NURSE

Mr. Orona. Please take a seat. Would you fill this out, please?

(SHE hands him a clip-board. PHONE rings.  
SHE turns to answer:)

Hospitality Sperm Bank. That's right, Mr. Kalinsky. The doctor recommends two days. Yes, I see. Why don't you come in first thing in the morning, sir. Very well. We'll see you then.

(SHE hangs up phone)

Now, let me see.

(To MR. ORONA:)

I can take that now, Mr. Oroma.

(SHE takes the clipboard back from him, studying it)

Oh, I see. All right, sir. I'll check on some of the things you've requested, and then we'll be all set.

(SHE exits; SHE reenters and approaches a cubicle door and knocks)

Mr. Curtis, it's time!

(SHE knocks again, almost pounding)

MR. CURTIS, YOUR TIME'S UP! Please, open the door.

MR. CURTIS

(From within the cubicle)

I'm not ready. Go away.

NURSE

(Continues speaking through door)

You will have to discontinue your ejaculatory stimulation.

MR. CURTIS

I said I need more time. Why can't you leave me alone?

NURSE

I'm terribly sorry, but you'll just have to reschedule for a return visit.

MR. CURTIS

I'd like to keep trying.

NURSE

(Again to MR. CURTIS, through closed door:)

I'm so sorry, Mr. Curtis. I must insist. Please come out.

MR. CURTIS

(Off)

I am almost there. Why do you keep interrupting me?

NURSE

I am truly sorry, sir, but you've already had an extension, and that was only possible because I had a cancellation. You'll just have to come back. I'd be more than happy to reschedule.

(Now to MR. ORONA:)

Your room will be ready in just a few minutes. I'm so sorry.

MR. ORONA

Not at all. I'm in no hurry.

MR. CURTIS

(Leaving cubicle, carrying his shoes and his jacket.  
His shirt tail protrudes from his open fly)

What do you expect me to accomplish in these conditions?

NURSE

I am terribly sorry, but I have to make up your room for Mr. Orona. He has an appointment.

MR. ORONA

Nice to meet you.

MR. CURTIS

Fine. I'll wait then. But make it snappy.

NURSE

(To MR. ORONA:)

Your room will be ready in just a few minutes. I want to tidy it up for you.

(To MR. CURTIS:)

I'm afraid you are going to have to return with an appointment, sir.

MR. CURTIS

That's impossible. I was half way there. I just need five more minutes, five lousy minutes.

NURSE

You had one extension already.

MR. CURTIS

If you had better magazines, I wouldn't need an extension. This stuff you've given me is crap.

NURSE

Well, I believe we've gone over this before, sir. All our patients are invited to bring their own materials.

MR. CURTIS

Who could get off reading this garbage? Besides, I'm not interested in old women. Would you look at them? They're decrepit.

(Thrusts an open porno magazine into ORONA'S face)

What about you, buddy, ever seen an old hag like this? You like 'em flabby? Look how she's sagging. And she probably stinks.

NURSE

You'll have to excuse me. I'm getting way behind. If you'd like to reschedule...

MR. CURTIS

While we're... Would you take a look at this damn thing?

(Holds up sample beaker for laboratory)

How do you expect me to aim it all into this? Huh? I could fill it with my tears!

NURSE

When would you like to return, Mr. Curtain?

MR. CURTIS

Cur-tis. Cur-tis. A thousand times, Curtis. Tomorrow, eight sharp. And I expect some decent materials. I never heard of patients having to provide their own supplies.

(HE storms out)

NURSE

All right, sir. I'm sorry for all the, um, disruption. How would you like to try our suite? I think you'd be more comfortable.

MR. ORONA

That's not necess...

NURSE

I think an exception can be made.

MR. ORONA

I don't want you to go to any troubl...

NURSE

It's no trouble at all.

MR. ORONA

Well...

NURSE

Let me check to make sure the lounge has been made up.

(SHE exits)

MR. CURTIS

(Reentering)

Hey, nurse.

(To ORONA:)

Where'd the receptionist go?

MR. ORONA

She said she'd be right back.

MR. CURTIS

Where'd she go this time? I've got to get this damned parking ticket validated.

MR. ORONA

She went to, uh, well, she didn't say.

MR. CURTIS

This is a sorry business.

MR. ORONA

What's that?

MR. CURTIS

Sperm-counts, motility rates, velocity, protein dilution, cell limpidity. I'll tell you what, buddy, this is not a conducive atmosphere. I'm on my third visit, and I can't even get an erection. How about you?

MR. ORONA

It's my first time.

MR. CURTIS

Oh, yeah? You're probably a little nervous. I know I was.

MR. ORONA

Nervous? Oh, no. To tell you the truth, I'm a little anxious.

MR. CURTIS

Really? What's your problem? Low count?

MR. ORONA

Why, no. No, not that...exactly.... It's my, uh, motility rate...

MR. CURTIS

The ol' motility, huh? Yeah, you got to get those little suckers to swim in the right direction. What else?

MR. ORONA

"What else?" I don't understand.

MR. CURTIS

These things tend to run in combinations.

MR. ORONA

As a matter of fact, my motility dysfunction is compounded by what's called abundant discharge syndrome.

MR. CURTIS

What the hell's that?

MR. ORONA

Well...

MR. CURTIS

You come too much, or what?

MR. ORONA

That's one way of putting it.

MR. CURTIS

That doesn't sound like such a bad thing.

MR. ORONA

It is for my wife.

MR. CURTIS

Better than going dry.

MR. ORONA

Somehow it throws everything off. Quantity is definitely not quality.

MR. CURTIS

Oh, yeah?

MR. ORONA

It degrades the sample, or so the doctor says.

MR. CURTIS

Is that so?

MR. ORONA

It's not just a matter of getting them to swim in the right direction, they have to want to get there.

MR. CURTIS

Yours turning back?

MR. ORONA

No, not that exactly. No, that's not it.

MR. CURTIS

It takes only one. Just one to breach the ramparts. One lousy specimen to break through and score.

(Holds arms overhead, indicating a touchdown)

MR. ORONA

(Enthusiastic)

Right.

MR. CURTIS

So, what's the problem?

MR. ORONA

(Suddenly down-in-the-mouth)

Well, they, uh... You know, I can't remember the term for it.

MR. CURTIS

Doctor show you a picture?

MR. ORONA

From the microscope? Yeah.

MR. CURTIS

Hell, they gave me a video to take home to show the wife.

MR. ORONA

Did they?

MR. CURTIS

Oh, yeah.

MR. ORONA

That must have been fascinating.

MR. CURTIS

Not especially. I found it embarrassing. My wife and I sitting there, watching a goddamned video of my seminal discharge. I've had trouble looking my wife and children in the face. It's humiliating. Coming down here, leaving samples.

Each little fellow struggling forward, then taking a sharp 180-degree turn and heading back to the barn. No, nothing particularly fascinating about that.

(Pause)

It's killed our sex life.

MR. ORONA

Oh?

MR. CURTIS

I can't seem to... I've lost my confidence.

MR. ORONA

Oh?

MR. CURTIS

I feel like I'm being accused, like they're turning back because I don't want them to move forward.

MR. ORONA

Oh?

MR. CURTIS

Or something.

(Pause)

My wife's convinced I can control them. She's all, "Honey, it's all in your head." And I'm thinking, "It is?"

MR. ORONA

You don't believe it is?

MR. CURTIS

What do you mean?

MR. ORONA

Well, mine don't just turn around exactly.

MR. CURTIS

I think you said that. What do they do?

MR. ORONA

They dance around.

MR. CURTIS

Mine used to do that.

MR. ORONA

You got to be kidding?

MR. CURTIS

No. They looked like those little hockey men. Remember the old electric board game – how they'd kind of huddle up and vibrate in place? That's my sperm. All huddled together, in a circle, like square dancers something.

MR. ORONA

Yeah, mine too.

MR. CURTIS

Turning this way and that. They didn't know what the fuck they were doing.

MR. ORONA

Right.

(Pause)

MR. CURTIS

It means you're sexually confused.

MR. ORONA

Oh?

MR. CURTIS

I saw a shrink. My wife sent me to a shrink, 'cause she read that homosexuals have a low sperm count.

MR. ORONA

Really?

MR. CURTIS

Some "ladies" magazine, the Red Book, something. I couldn't convince her otherwise. I mean I stayed hard day and night the first six months we were married. She stopped wearing panties because I'd just rip them off her. There was no fucking way I'm some fag, but she read in one of those how-to-please-your magazines that fertility problems are all in your head and next thing you know I'm seeing a shrink. A shrink. He had a statue of Freud on his coffee table. It was humiliating.

MR. ORONA

I bet.

MR. CURTIS

You understand.

(Pause)

He said:

(HE whispers inaudibly into ORONA'S ear)

MR. ORONA

Really?

MR. CURTIS

And when I returned for a recount, they found those little suckers had stopped dancing and were heading in the right direction.

MR. ORONA

Incredible.

MR. CURTIS

But then they'd turn around and start heading back.

MR. ORONA

Really?

MR. CURTIS

Those little hockey guys, remember how they'd sort of vibrate forward, bzzzzzz, and then stop? Or turn? Just like that? Those little fish of mine make a mad dash, I mean, zoom! Then they slow, turn this way, then that, like they're going out for a pass, you know, faking one way, then the other. And, then, they turn around and head slowly back to where they came from. Like they change their minds.

MR. ORONA

Mine too. They seem to know instinctively there's too much competition. Right out of the gate, they give up the struggle and quit.

MR. CURTIS

Like they're scared. Something scares them and they turn back. They don't run! They sneak back. They slink back.

NURSE

(Reentering; to MR. ORONA:)

All right, Mr. Aroma, I mean Orona. I'm terrible with names. Your room is ready...

MR. CURTIS

(Butting in)

...Miss?

NURSE

(To MR. ORONA:)

...and you'll find the materials you requested on the table next to the relaxation couch.

MR. CURTIS

Miss? I'm in a terrible hurry. I've got to get back to work.

NURSE

Oh, why, hello there, Mr. Curtain.

MR. CURTIS

Curtis.

NURSE  
 Back already?

MR. CURTIS  
 I need my parking validated.

NURSE  
 Oh, didn't I do that already?

MR. CURTIS  
 You're sure you don't have an extra room. I'm dying to get this over with.

MR. ORONA  
 Why don't you take mine? I'm in no hurry.

NURSE  
 Oh, that's very kind of you, but...

MR. CURTIS  
 I owe you one, buddy. Thanks.

NURSE  
 (To MR. ORONA:)  
 If you're sure...

MR. CURTIS  
 Of course, he's sure. Come on. We're wasting time.

NURSE  
 All right, then, why don't you step into the first room right over there, sir? It's all ready.

MR. CURTIS  
 (Heading for the room)  
 Great. Thanks a lot, pal. See you around. Good luck.

MR. ORONA  
 You, too.

(MR. CURTIS opens the door and steps in,  
 closing the door behind him.)

NURSE  
 That was very generous of you. I'll try to prepare another cubicle.  
 (SHE goes down the hall)

MR. KALINSKY

(Entering the reception area; HE speaks  
with a thick Russian accent)

Excuse me, this office for deposit of the sperm, yes?

MR. ORONA

Yes. Yes, it is.

MR. KALINSKY

Splendid. I have the appointment and I'm ready for action.

MR. ORONA

Yes, well, the secretary has stepped away from her desk, but she'll be right back.

MR. KALINSKY

This first time for me, and what an occasion. Imagine! We come to make a deposit of the manly fishes. In Russia, we call Virile Storage Depository, here you call Sperm *Bank*. Only in America.

NURSE

(Hurries by, carrying towels, magazines)

Oh, uh, may I help you?

MR. KALINSKY

I have come to make deposit into new account.

NURSE

I'm sorry?

MR. KALINSKY

I am ready to - how you say? - to milk the bull?

NURSE

What?

MR. KALINSKY

Uh, stroke the sunflower? Strum the balalaika? How you say? Uh, baseball, baseball, uh, swing the bat? I don't know. My English need rubdown.

NURSE

Are you the man from the Russian consulate?

MR. KALINSKY

(Offering an elaborate bow, followed by clicking of heels)

Boris Kalinsky at your service.

NURSE

Mr. Kalinsky, your appointment is for tomorrow.

MR. KALINSKY

Impossible. Tomorrow is the Magic Kingdom of Disneyland for family.

NURSE

Oh, my gosh.

(More or less to herself)

I knew I shouldn't have taken Mr. Curtis without an appointment.

(Now to MR. KALINSKY:)

Is it possible for you to return another day? I'm afraid we're booked up. I don't have a free room.

MR. KALINSKY

I don't understand. You want I call to doctor? You want I make trouble for doctor's visa application?

NURSE

No, no, no, Mr. Kalinsky. The doctor said you are a very important man. I'm sure we can find something for you.

MR. KALINSKY

You need that I help you?

NURSE

No, that won't be necessary.

(MR. KALINSKY opens door to cubicle)

MR. CURTIS

(Off)

Do you mind?

MR. KALINSKY

Russian government needs room. Pack up family jewels and make way.

MR. CURTIS

What the hell are you talking about?

(NURSE closes door)

NURSE

(To MR. KALINSKY:)

Sir, you mustn't do that. We guarantee our patients the utmost privacy.

MR. KALINSKY

You Americans. In Russia we take bath together. Modesty is for little girls and their grandmothers.

NURSE

It's an emergency, Mr. Curtis, please come out. I'm so sorry.

(Now to MR. KALINSKY:)

I'm sure your room will be ready soon.

MR. KALINSKY

I am appreciate.

(THEY walk back toward NURSE'S station/reception desk)

May I call for assistance if missile fails to launch, yes?

NURSE

I beg your... Oh, No! No, don't call me, Mr. Kalinsky, if missile fails. There's a phone in each room for that purpose. You call mission control, if the missile doesn't launch.

MR. KALINSKY

Mission control?

NURSE

Call home, Mr. Kalinsky. You call your wife if you need help.

MR. KALINSKY

Call home for help... Oh, that's very funny, that real American joke.

(HE sits; To ORONA:)

Wife wants twins. So I eat one dozen oysters every day for breakfast. What's your secret?

MR. ORONA

Oh, I don't have a secret. But I've given up smoking.

MR. KALINSKY

Terrible!

(CURTIS steps from cubicle looking desperate)

NURSE

(To CURTIS:)

Now, sir. I know what you are going to say, but...

MR. CURTIS

What are you trying to do to me?

NURSE

I'll put you in right away. You can have the suite. Mr. Orona said he is in no hurry.

MR. ORONA

Go ahead. Take it.

NURSE

We'll have you back in action in no time.

MR. CURTIS

That-a-girl.

NURSE

I'll go finish preparing your rooms.  
(SHE exits)

MR. KALINSKY

(Begins doing a set of exercises. Instead of counting,  
HE recites as follows:)

Lenin. Stalin. Khrushchev. Brezhnev.

(Suddenly to ORONA and CURTIS:)

Hey! I have the idea! Let us have contest. Two Americans up against superb example of Russian masculinity. I propose we set the clock, and first man to blast off is treated to celebration happy hour. What you say to exciting contest idea?

MR. CURTIS

Who will judge?

MR. KALINSKY

Why, nurse, of course. Winner brings filled flask to nurse.

NURSE

The video you requested is on the console. Gentlemen, you are free to enter your cubicles.

MR. KALINSKY

(To MR. CURTIS:)

You take up challenge, yes?

MR. CURTIS

Why not?

MR. KALINSKY

(To MR. ORONA:)

And my little fellow? What do you say to proposal?

MR. ORONA

I don't know. It's sounds very adolescent.

MR. KALINSKY

Obsolescent? Oh, I see!

(Pats ORONA vigorously on back)

No, manhood never obsolete. No matter how difficult to achieve. Like Russian soul from communism, you will revive.

(HE looks around meaningfully)

May the best man be victorious.

(The three men enter their respective cubicles,  
as the NURSE returns to her desk.)

MR. CURTIS

(Storms out of cubicle with a stack of girlie magazines)

You've given me the wrong materials.

NURSE

I don't think so, sir.

MR. CURTIS

My fourteen year old son gets off on this sort of shit.

NURSE

Sir, if you're going to talk this way...

MR. CURTIS

You should be ashamed. These girls can't be more than thirteen years old.

NURSE

We don't judge our patients' proclivities.

MR. CURTIS

Proclivities? I'll give you proclivities. Take a look at this one. She's younger than my daughter.

NURSE

Well, yes, but isn't that what you requested?

MR. CURTIS

What are you implying? I'm no pedophile.

NURSE

On our questionnaire. You said you prefer little girls...

(Pulling a sheet from the file)

...I have your request right here - "preferred age: twelve to eighteen."

MR. CURTIS

I said no such thing. Let me see that.

(HE grabs his file from her hands)

MR. ORONA

(Now MR. ORONA approaches)

Will you look at these magazines? The pages are either all torn up or stuck together.

NURSE

They weren't like that when I gave them to you, sir.

MR. ORONA

And just look at the cover. She's a cow! And the rest. Look! Every last one of them. They're gigantic, circus freaks.

NURSE

Isn't that what you requested?

MR. ORONA

Absolutely not.

NURSE

Your form says here "preferred weight: two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds."

MR. ORONA

It says no such thing. Give me that.

NURSE

Well, if it's not yours, whose is it?

MR. CURTIS

Not mine.

NURSE

(To ORONA:)

If you didn't request large women, what did you ask for?

MR. ORONA

(Embarrassed, HE whispers)

Young girls.

NURSE

I didn't catch that. What did you say?

MR. ORONA

Girls.

MR. CURTIS

Here, I've got your stuff by mistake. You ought to be whipped, you pervert!

(HE dumps a stack of magazines at MR. ORONA's feet)

MR. ORONA

Me? Whoever heard of porn stars as big as Sumo wrestlers? You pig.

(Suddenly loud groans can be heard coming from MR. KALINSKY's room. The sounds grow louder and louder. The NURSE, MR. CURTIS, and MR. ORONA stand together, their ears glued to the door, until they hear cries of ecstasy. Suddenly, MR. KALINSKY comes running out, holding a flask in his hand)

MR. KALINSKY

I did it! I've won! I've won! Yes?

(Stops suddenly)

What are you doing out? You beat me to it?

MR. ORONA

We never even got started.

MR. CURTIS

Yeah, our materials got mixed up.

MR. ORONA

(Thrusting his magazines into KALINSKY's face)

Get a load of these fat slob, sunbathing on the beach.

MR. KALINSKY

Yes, yes, I like. Real Russians.

MR. CURTIS

(Passing magazines to KALINSKY)

Yeah, well I got stuck with Orona's fantasy: little girls wearing Mickey Mouse bras and Winnie-the-Pooh panties.

MR. KALINSKY

American Porno-land. I love it! You got children's literature and Orona, my Russian beauties. This means video I watched reserved special for you, yes?

NURSE

Oh, I am so sorry. I'm terrible with names. I get everything all mixed up.

MR. KALINSKY

(MR. KALINSKY embraces MR. CURTIS)

Thank you. You know this video, yes? You like?

MR. CURTIS

Let's shake on a job well done. Congratulations.

MR. KALINSKY

Very clever. I like, too. But I have question. What is name of American sport with the rolling orange?

MR. CURTIS

Let's have that drink. Mr. Orona, are you coming?

MR. ORONA

Uh, no, I don't believe so. I, uh, I'd still like to leave a sample for the doctor if I may. I promised my wife...

NURSE

Come with me, Mr. Aroma. Your cubicle is waiting.

(THEY exit)

MR. KALINSKY

In video, naked man and woman on floor, each on opposite corner. And the orange is rolled across floor. What sport this named?

MR. CURTIS

It's just called fun. It's not a sport.

MR. KALINSKY

Fun. Yes, fun. Another favorite part, I love. But question: why does master's buttocks not turn purple when servant girl strikes again and again with whip?

MR. CURTIS

Look, I've got to get back to work.

MR. KALINSKY

You call this sport the S and the M, yes?

MR. CURTIS

Are we having that drink, or not?

MR. KALINSKY

Da, da! Sure, sure! But I want copy this video. I enjoy the rough stuff very much. NURSE!  
NURSE!

(Nurse Reenters)

MR. KALINSKY (cont'd)

I want order 15 copy of marvelous video offered to my friend. Special copies for Ambassador. On the double, yes?

NURSE

Yes. Yes, of course, sir. Right away. Shall I send the bill to the consulate, Mr.Kalinsky?

MR. KALINSKY

Send bill with copy of video. It fine example of American movie making.

NURSE

When will you be returning, Mr. Curtain?

MR. CURTIS

Curtis. I'll stop off on the way to work in the morning.

(The men head for the exit)

NURSE

That'll be 7:30, sir. Oh, and Mr. Kalinsky, I've sent your sample straight to the lab.

MR. KALINSKY

Come, Mr. Curtis. Let me explain why fat women possess great sexual appetites.

(The two men walk out together)

**END OF PLAY**

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