

DR. HYDE AND "MR. JECKYLL"

by Paul M. Riley M.D. F.A.C. S.

Dr. Hyde was a well known Obstetrics doctor in Grand Rapids Michigan. He was very handsome and well groomed. His patients adored him. He spoke to his patients with a very cultured, reassuring Southern accent; his dress was always impeccable, and he treated all his patients with great respect. All his patients were addressed as "Maam". Each of his patients thought she was his own special patient! They even confronted him with their medical problems when they met him away from his office! Patients would often wait until Dr. Hyde was home to call him with their medical problems, but then, because he was such a good listener, they started calling him with their non-medical problems as well! Ladies, in his neighborhood, would watch for Dr. Hyde's car to go by; then the phone would start ringing when he walked in the door. Often his supper would be delayed because the phone kept ringing. He had to keep changing his home phone number, changing cars, and wearing disguises, to try to get time to relax when he was off duty. Women would plan their pregnancies so Dr. Hyde would not be on vacation at delivery time. Many women said that they would not have another child if Dr. Hyde would move away or become disabled, they would not trust any other doctor! Many of his patients had their deliveries induced to make sure Dr. Hyde would be there at the time of delivery!

Dr. Hyde's patients had no idea that when he was off duty, he would have a complete change of personality. He would not shave, wear dirty, tattered, overalls, keep a stupid look on his face, adopt a bent, shuffling gait while keeping his eyes and mouth half open, not comb his hair, and speak like an ignorant hillbilly. He loved to do manual work for relaxation. He quickly became dirty and disheveled! He worked restoring two vintage cars, doing home improvements, and yard work. His patients often asked him about the ugly, dirty, man doing his yard work or working on his cars. His disguise was so good that he would walk by his patients in stores or on the streets without them recognizing him! He was also happy when he was able to fool even his acquaintances and friends.

One Saturday morning Mrs. Hyde was going shopping across town. Dr. Hyde, who was on vacation, asked her to drop him off at a thrift store on Skid Row. Because it was a high crime area, Dr. Hyde did not take his billfold. He arranged for a time to be picked up outside the store. He did not know that was a drug dealers' hangout. While waiting for his wife to return, Dr. Hyde noticed that a police car kept circling the block. Finally it stopped where Dr. Hyde was standing. "Hey mister", the policeman shouted, "can't you read the sign? It says NO LOITERING". "But I am just waiting for my wife; she will be picking me up in about five minutes. I am Dr. Hyde, I have been shopping for antiques", Dr. Hyde replied. "Now I know you are lying", the policeman replied. "My wife goes to Dr. Hyde. She says he is the best dressed, most handsome gentleman she has ever met. Look at you; you look worse than a hobo. I am sure the boys at the station would like to hear your story!"

Dr. Hyde was handcuffed and taken to the police station. He tried to call home but his wife was driving all over Skid Row looking for him. He tried to call friends, but they would hang up on him, thinking it was another one of his jokes! Only when Mrs. Hyde came to the police station to report him missing did the police realize their mistake. Mrs. Hyde was terribly embarrassed. She was very tempted to deny knowing him! But Dr. Hyde was elated that he had been mistaken for a tramp or maybe even a drug dealer!

Dr. Hyde spent one vacation painting the outside of his house, starting at the back of the house. By the time he got to the front of the house his cap and overalls were well splattered with paint and his face was covered with scraggly whiskers. Over the next two days he noticed a brand new Cadillac moving slowly past his house several times a day. Finally, one day, just after Mrs. Hyde left in her car, the Cadillac pulled into the driveway. "Hey Boy, come here", the driver shouted several times up to Dr. Hyde who was at the top of the ladder. Dr. Hyde carefully hung his paint bucket on the hook at the top of the ladder, then slowly descended and shuffled up to the Cadillac. He recognized the driver as a very rich lady he and his wife had met at some social function. She was wearing very expensive jewelry! He also recalled that she was quite a gossip! "Were you calling me maam"? Dr. Hyde asked in his best hillbilly accent. "Yes boy", she replied, I have been watching you, you are doing a great job. When you get through, come and paint my house. I know this doctor's wife; she is very cheap. I know she does not appreciate your good work! If you do a good job on my house, I will pay you twice as much as she is paying you; here is my card. "You are right maam, she don't pay me very much", he replied. Then lowering his voice and leaning close to her, he said in a loud, coarse whisper; "But she do let me sleep with her." The Cadillac went squealing out of the driveway, never to be seen again in front of his house!

Mrs. Hyde was puzzled when she started getting cold stares at social functions. At a wedding, they attended, Dr. and Mrs. Hyde sat in the seat in front of the Cadillac lady. Much to his delight the lady did not recognize him as the house painter. He never mentioned to his wife about their impromptu meeting in the driveway!

One by one Dr. Hyde's patients stopped calling him at home when he started answering the phone in a weird husky whisper: "Maam, you have got to stop calling me like this, my wife is becoming suspicious", then he would quickly hang up the phone!

I think I have met my share of unusual characters, Dr. Hyde being one of them. They have certainly added some spice to my profession.

Paul M. Riley, MD: FACS "- Riverside, CA. Email:- hlinza@ymail.com