

Do Pink Nurses Need Insurance?

According to Wikipedia, "Any risk that can be quantified can potentially be insured." This is a relatively easy concept to understand. We take out policies to cover potential risk to pets and cars, and know why it makes sense to have home insurance. However, sometimes the concept of quantifying 'risk' becomes rather a grey area.

It's pretty much understood that as patients we're covered against negligence should we receive treatment from doctors and nurses in hospital. Any 'normal' person attempting to perform First Aid should be aware that if they administer the 'wrong' treatment, they could potentially face a lawsuit, even if they were attempting to save someone's life. However, this weekend I faced the most surreal situation, when someone threatened to sue me because I wasn't a nurse...

Most people know that it is a criminal offence to impersonate a police officer. There are even more obvious dangers posed by those who impersonate members of the medical profession. However, when it comes to theatre, there is room for a little artistic license.

It seemed obvious that on a bright sunny day, five women wandering round pavement cafes, wearing candy-floss pink nurses uniforms and waving (pink) feather dusters, wouldn't possibly be seen as 'real' medics. If there was any doubt about our status, the fact that we administered a range of 'treatments' from dire 'bloke jokes' to candy love heart 'medicine', should have made the performance aspect clear. We were acting.

Therefore, I was left speechless after a vitriolic verbal attack for failing to be a 'real' nurse. Someone overdid it; drank too much in the sunshine, didn't want to leave her café seat, nor would she pay for her drinks. Eventually, the police were called to remove the gin sozzled woman, we saw them departing as we came to the end of a long day performing. We didn't expect what came next.

"You should be ashamed of yourselves", said a rather threatening bloke sporting a mono-brow.

We were confused to say the least.

"You could have stopped all this, it's ruined my day. If you'd done your job, this never would have happened"

We tried to explain the obvious – that we were not really nurses.

"Don't give me that," he replied, 'I've got good grounds to sue you.'

We put it down to too much beer in the sun and hoped he'd go away, leave us to enjoy a well-earned glass of wine. But it didn't stop there. He enlisted the help of a waitress, and told her that we hadn't acted professionally. For some reason, she believed him, decided that we had some connection to the drunken lady and were asked to leave, amidst further threats of suing us for negligence...

Sometime later, as we sat down to free cocktails with an unmitigated apology from the bar manager, our talk turned to concerns about public liability insurance. Clearly, there were many gaps in our knowledge of quantifying 'risk' – not to others, but to ourselves.

About the Author

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