



**T**he disciplinary meeting occurred without my knowledge.

I knew there was unrest between the gynecologists. They split into two groups over a year ago, and thereafter competition for patients was vendetta-like in intensity. There was no communication between the enemy camps. When members of either were present at hospital staff meetings, they wouldn't look at or speak to one another.

I knew that a certain doctor of the smaller splinter group, Dr. E, was particularly detested by Dr. A, a member of the larger. Dr. A could often be heard in the staff lounge expounding on Dr. E's failings. This animosity was mostly bitching that came from the bad feelings surrounding the split. I didn't take it terribly seriously, until this edict was circulated on the hospital email system:

Hospital privileges have been suspended for Dr. E immediately as per decision of the Medical Staff meeting of 2003/03/30. Referrals can be directed to any of the active gynecologists on the referral list.

And that was it. The hospital had dropped Dr. E. I hadn't been told about the decision, hadn't heard about the meeting. Neither had any of the other family doctors I asked.

I began to look back and revisit overheard lounge conversations, the cafeteria lineup chats, the war-camp emanations from both groups. I grew outraged that such a decision occurred in my name (I'm part of medical staff). Besides, my own kind liked Dr. E and thought him to be the best doctor to take on troubled obstetrical patients, those with addic-

tion or personality problems. He had never given us any trouble and we considered him a gracious specialist.

I remembered overtures made to solicit my disapproval a few months ago. A member of the larger group approached me and said that there had been some "trouble" with Dr. E; there were often bad "outcomes." Did I have any?

I told him no. And I thought nothing of it then ...

Today I asked the chief of medical staff why I hadn't been informed of the meeting, and why my colleagues hadn't, either. He said it was a "special" meeting of "the parties involved." I asked him what that meant. He refused to elaborate, other than to say the matter was now "closed." I asked for the minutes of this "special" meeting. He wouldn't provide them.

I wonder about the nature of this incident. It scares me. In my worst nightmares, a blood-thirsty college attempts to placate its hunger with the licences of random physicians — including me — much like Godzilla trampling the occasional fleeing citizen or toppling a building in his path. In this case, it wasn't a faceless college that did the trampling. My fellow physicians had perpetrated this professional assassination, *even though Dr. E had never received a complaint through the provincial college.*

Dr. E still lives and practises in town. I'm told his list has been sorely hurt and there is much space between appointments. He cannot operate because his hospital privileges have been revoked; consequently, he is financially desperate.

I refer patients to him as much as I can.

— *Dr. Ursus*