

## A race to the hospital

**November 16, 2020 20h30 - 21h30**

Copy this link into a browser: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83557612942> to join the Zoom meeting.

### Vocabulary

**Jobsworth:** (UK: derogatory, informal) an official who upholds petty rules even at the expense of humanity or common sense.

**To budge:** make or cause to make the slightest movement or change of plan.

**To mangle (something):** to destroy something by twisting it with force or tearing it into pieces so that its original form is completely changed.

**Colourful language:** you use words that are usually considered rude or offensive.

**Swagger:** a very confident and arrogant or self-important gait or manner.

**To rule somebody/something with a rod of iron:** (expression also rule somebody with an iron fist/hand) to control a group of people in a very severe way.

### A new baby

The ambulance had just arrived and Henrietta Riser, who was in labour, had been taken to the hospital. Earl-Lea felt relieved but adrenaline was still coursing through his veins. He had completely forgotten his disappointment about the job offer that had just been withdrawn. It was replaced by an excitement and anticipation as well as frustration as he rejoined the virtually standstill traffic.

A few minutes later the traffic started moving again. After a few more minutes Earl-Lea was driving at 70 miles per hour and hoping to be at the hospital in about a quarter of an hour. He passed the scene of the accident where two mangled cars and a truck had been pulled over to the side of the road.

When Earl-Lea arrived at the maternity unit he was asked for some identification. Apparently a new born baby had been kidnapped a few months earlier and together with COVID restrictions the hospital was more vigilant than ever. Earl-Lea plunged his hand into his trouser pockets and realized that he had completely forgotten his wallet and hence he had no identification.

He spoke to the receptionist but she was not budging. She would not let him through to the birthing room until he could prove who he was. He was beginning to get irritated and demanded that the receptionist call her supervisor. The supervisor was a little jobsworth who immediately took a dislike to Earl-Lea on account of his American accent and swagger. He absolutely refused to let Earl-Lea through to the room where Henrietta was, probably, even now giving birth. Earl-Lea's temper flared and he began yelling. The receptionist told him to sit down and be quiet otherwise she would call the police. Earl-Lea was infuriated and told the supervisor and her colleague what he thought of them using a lot of colourful language that most people in the waiting room had never heard before.

With great frustration Earl-Lea phoned his father-in-law's cell phone. It was by now 7:15 a.m. and Earl-Lea hoped that Mr Tufty was awake. He answered the phone within three rings.

"Howdy, its Earl-Lea. We're at the hospital."

Earl-Lea could hear Mrs Tufty in the background asking what was going on, in a worried tone of voice. Falmouth was barking.

"What's going on?"

Earl-Lea told Mr Tufty about all his and Henrietta's adventures that morning. He explained that he was stuck in the waiting room and they would not let him see Henrietta, "She might be giving birth now. She

might have given birth, I just don't know!"

"Stay right there. Give me a few minutes, I'll make some calls" replied Mr Tufty.

Earl-Lea sat for a few anxious minutes before Mr Tufty called him back.

"Go back to the desk and they will take you to Henrietta. By the way, congratulations on your new baby!"

Earl-Lea walked over to the desk and was greeted by smiles and charm by the receptionist. It would later transpire that Mr Tufty was a good friend of the chairman of the hospital board who ruled the hospital with a rod of iron. Unhelpful staff would receive their just rewards.

Finally Earl Lea entered Henrietta's room and explained why he was late. She looked exhausted and was holding a little bundle close to her chest. She smiled at Earl-Lea sleepily and said, meet Miss Thandie Riser, your beautiful daughter.

Earl-Lea walked closer and the little girl grabbed his finger. Tears formed in Earl-Lea's eyes...

### Questions for discussion

1. Do you think the hospital receptionist and her supervisor handled the situation very well?
2. How could Earl-Lea have behaved differently?
3. What do you think Earl-Lea's emotional state was? Do you think that this was typical of Earl-Lea?
4. Have you every been in a situation where you didn't have the correct identification? How did you handle it?
5. Are there any 'jobsworths' in France? Describe one.
6. What just rewards might the unhelpful receptionist receive?
7. What measures do you think should be in place to protect the safety of babies in hospitals?

### The pronunciation challenge

The pronunciation challenge has been recorded and posted to the English Champions web site:

<https://englishchampions.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Pronunciation-challenge.mp4>

### Dates des cours

	septembre	octobre	novembre (on-line)
Intermédiaire / avancé lundi 20h30 - 21h30	21, 28	5, 12	2, 9, 16, 23, 30