

WREN

Hi, you're through to NHS 111, I'm Wren, are you calling for yourself or someone else today?

ALEX

Calling for myself.

WREN

Can you give me your date of birth?

ALEX

Yeh that's, January 12th 2000.

[TYPING]

WREN

Right, can you give me your surname?

ALEX Derwent.

[TYPING]

WREN

(muttering as they type)

Der...went. And first name?

ALEX

Alex.

[TYPING]

WREN

Ok, Alex can I get your full address please?

ALEX

Uh yeah it's 14, Barton Street...

[TYPING]

WREN

Uh-huh, postcode?

ALEX

Right, sorry! That's EC...3R 5....DD

[TYPING]

WREN

Right. Now can you briefly tell me the reason for your call today?

ALEX

Um, I'm just feeling quite nauseous and I have this like...stabbing pain um in my chest?

WREN

Ok, and on a scale from 1 to 10 how bad is the pain?

ALEX

Like a... like a 6, maybe?

WREN

Ok, so you're holding up alright?

ALEX

Yeah, I think so.

WREN

And have you lost any blood at all?

ALEX

No.

WREN

You been feeling lightheaded, any vomiting?

ALEX

No, but I do feel like I'm going to be sick. All the time.

WREN

Ok and how's your breathing, does that seem normal?

ALEX

Um... not really, no. I think it's been getting faster. Like, I feel like I can hear my heartbeat, it's weird.

WREN

Right. And does your brain feel foggy?

ALEX

Not- I mean a bit, yeah, but I can still think, if you know what I mean.

WREN

What's 8 plus 7?

ALEX

Oh shit... 6--uh 15.

WREN

Sorry, is maths not your strong suit?

ALEX

God no, I'm quite shit at it.

WREN

No worries, what does C-A-T spell?

ALEX

Cat.

WREN

Very good. Sorry for the tests, we just want to rule out certain options, you know, make sure we know what we're dealing with.

ALEX

Yeah, no, of course.

WREN

Ok, now do you have any other symptoms that are causing you trouble at the moment?

ALEX

Yeah, um... I'm, like, quite anxious. I don't know, I've just been getting a bit panicky. Uh, the chest pain is a bit worse now than- than when I first mentioned it.

WREN

I see, what would you rate the pain at now?

ALEX

7?

WREN

Ok... Right, well I'm going to see if we have anyone in your area that can come over and take a look at you, just take your vitals and see if you need further treatment, yeah?

ALEX

Yes, yeah, thank you.

WREN

I'll just pop you on hold for a minute.

ALEX

Mhmm.

[CLICK]

ALEX

(deep breath)

It's ok, you're ok, you're ok. Fuck, that's itchy...

[FABRIC RUSTLE. PAUSE]

Oh shit, did I forget to mention that?

[CLICK]

WREN

Alright, you still there?

ALEX

Yep, I'm here, I just realised- *(overlapping)*

WREN

Ok, we're- Sorry what was that?

ALEX

Sorry, um, I just realised that I forgot to mention, I've got like a bite too?

WREN

A bite?

ALEX

Yeah, it's not bad or anything, just kind of itchy, inflamed.

WREN

Did your symptoms start after this bite?

ALEX

Yeah. Not for a while though. Sorry I forgot to mention it before I didn't think it was related.

WREN

No problem, well I'll be sure to pass that information on. I've sent someone round to you, they should be with you in around 10, 15 minutes, alright?

ALEX

Yeah... yes, of course.

WREN

Alright, if you have any new or worsening symptoms, or change in your condition while you're waiting give us a ring back, yeah?

ALEX

M-hmm, thank you.

WREN

No worries, take care. Bye.

ALEX Bye.

[CALL HANG-UP. PAUSE. PHONE DIALS. RINGS. RINGS FOUR MORE TIMES.]

ZO

Hello!

ALEX Hey Zo, sorry to—

ZO

Hellooooo? I can't hear you.

ALEX

Oh, hey is this—

ZO

Sorry, haha I'm not in right now, leave a message. Or just text me like a normal person.

[BEEP. ALEX HANGS UP]

ALEX
Ughhhh.

[DIALLING. THREE RINGS]

FRIEND
Hello?

ALEX
Hey, um, sorry, I know I don't usually call but I just- I'm freaking out. A little.

FRIEND
(*vaguely disinterested*)
Oh shit, yeah? What's up?

ALEX
I don't know, I've just been feeling really sick all day and one of my arms is kind of swelling up. I'm waiting for a paramedic to come.

FRIEND
Damn. That's rough. Did you call an ambulance?

ALEX
Well... yeah that's- that's why I'm waiting for the paramedic.

FRIEND
Ooooh right, that's good. Uh huh.

ALEX
Sorry, are you busy?

FRIEND
Yeah, I'm at my friend's place right now so...

ALEX
Oh... ok.

FRIEND
Yeah, sorry, I've been on the phone for a while and I don't wanna seem, like, rude or anything, you know? I haven't seen her in ages.

ALEX
Right, yeah, of course.

FRIEND

Later.

[FRIEND HANGS UP]

ALEX

Seeya.

[PAUSE. ALEX BEGINS TO HYPERVENTILATE]

ALEX

No, no, it's ok, it's fine. Someone will be here soon, it's fine, you're ok.

[PHONE RINGS. THEY ANSWER IMMEDIATELY]

ALEX

Hello?

WREN

Hiya, this is Wren. I've just been in touch with your local paramedics and they've informed me that, unfortunately, their previous job demanded a little more time than anticipated so they're running around 10 minutes late. They should be with you in about 25 minutes, is that alright?

ALEX

Oh... right... ok. (*breathing increases again*) Ok ok, I'll- I can j- (*hyperventilating again*)

WREN

Ok, Alex, can you breathe? Can you just breathe with me for a minute?

ALEX

I'm so sorry- I- I am trying it just-

WREN

That's ok, you're alright just breathe in slowly, ok? In through your nose, out through your mouth, are you with me?

ALEX

(*breath steadying*)

Yes, yeah sorry, sorry I don't normally get like this.

WREN

That's ok, take your time.

[ALEX KEEPS BREATHING, GRADUALLY SLOWING DOWN UNTIL THEIR BREATHS ARE INAUDIBLE]

WREN

Hello? Are you still there?

ALEX

...Can I stay on the phone with you?

WREN

Sorry I-

ALEX

I don't have anyone here. I'm- I'm home alone and I don't know any of my neighbours and I'm scared.

WREN

Right... ok. I'll stay on the line with you until the paramedics arrive, ok?

ALEX

Thank you.

WREN

How are your symptoms at the moment?

ALEX

I still have that chest pain. It's worse from the, just not being able to breath but it's evening out now a bit.

WREN

Yeah, just keep an eye on that and let's make sure you keep your breathing steady, just to avoid any further discomfort if we can.

ALEX

Mmhmm.

[PAUSE]

WREN

So... what do you do?

ALEX Temp work, mostly. Uh- I'm working at a post office at the moment.

WREN

Oh, lovely. And do you enjoy that?

ALEX

No.

[PAUSE]

WREN

Right, well... that's a shame... Good thing it's a temp job then, ay?

ALEX

God yeah, kind of a miracle I haven't been fired yet too. This guy came in last week looking super nervous, I'm 90% sure he was mailing drugs but it was all packaged correctly and he had the right stamps on it so I didn't check.

WREN

(*shocked*)

Oh, wow.

ALEX

Wait, can you get me in trouble for saying that?

WREN

No, no, it's just- funny. I can't believe someone would be that bold.

ALEX

Yeah, people get weird at the post office, man! I had a lady get mad at me because she still had to pay for stamps. And I had to explain to her that there was just, never a time when you didn't? And presumably she had just been stealing stamps from her old post office without anyone noticing?

WREN

Oh my gosh?!

ALEX

I have served some interesting people in my time. Including the guy that bit me actually, I think he was pretty coked up or something- (*overlapping*)

WREN

Wait sorry, a person bit you? I thought you said it was an insect bite?

ALEX

No? He was- (*concerned*) Oh man, it's actually... it's actually looking a fair bit worse now...

WREN
The bite is?

ALEX
Yeah, kinda.

WREN
Can you describe it for me?

ALEX
(*panicking*)
It's like... where it was red around the teeth marks, my veins look darker and I can't... when I touch the skin around it I can't... feel anything.

WREN
...Ok.

ALEX
Oh god.

WREN
Alright, hold on-

ALEX
It feels really weird.

WREN
Ok, hold on, let's just calm down, keep breathing, remember help is on the way, alright?

ALEX
Ok?

WREN
Is there anything you're looking forward to doing on the weekend?

ALEX
I- Yes, yeah I'm gonna go see my nephews, um, it's their birthday. Twins. They're t-turning 4.

WREN

Aw, that's lovely. My girl's 4!

ALEX
Yeah?

WREN
What will you do with your nephews then, to celebrate?

ALEX
I don't know, um- I mean they have a lot of energy I- I think they're getting a bouncy castle or something. Oh, and we were gonna play football together but now... now I don't know if I really can, it's so-

WREN
They're good at football then, yeah?

ALEX
It just... it won't go down and I can't- I can't feel my fingers it's all... I can't-

WREN
Alex, Alex, just breathe, ok? I'm still right here, medics will be with you at any moment, do you hear me?

ALEX
I won't see them. I'm never gonna see them again- No, no I can't... It's all closing-

WREN
Alex, I need you to stay with me.

ALEX
I can't! I'm try- I'm really trying.

WREN
Ok, slow down, can you tell me what's happening?

ALEX
My heart is moving- It's moving too fast and I- it's in my head, I can't think, it's just- I can't-

WREN
Alex, I really need you to stay with me now.

ALEX
Mmm-my my arm is gone- I don't-

WREN

What do you mean, your arm is gone?

ALEX

It's j- it's gone- it's, it's on the floor- I can't-

WREN

Listen to me, ok? Please, please stay with me, I am going to help you. Just hold on for a minute. You're going to be ok.

ALEX

I'm gonna be ok?

WREN

We are going to make sure you're ok.

ALEX

I don't feel ok. (*beat*) I'm scared- I ca- can't- I can't I can't I, I can't- (*voice becomes distorted, creature-like*)

WREN

Alex? Alex Can you still hear me? Wait- please just...

[END]