

## CORONERS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1959

*Deposition of Witness* taken on TUESDAY the 5th day of FEBRUARY 2003, at inquest touching the death of RAYCHEL FERGUSON, before me MR J L LECKEY, Coroner for the District of GREATER BELFAST as follows to wit:-

*The Deposition of* MRS MARIE FERGUSON of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] who being sworn upon his oath, saith

On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2001 at approximately 15.20 hrs my daughter Raychel, date of birth 04 02 1992 returned from school, St Patricks Pennyburn. Raychel was in good form and just went outside to play as she normally would. She returned to the house again at about 16.30 hours and she was asking when the dinner would be ready as she had what she described as hunger pains in her stomach. At about 16.45 hours we sat down to dinner and Raychel ate as she normally would. Raychel went out to play again. On her return she was complaining that even after her dinner the pains were still in her stomach. Raychel was in and out a few times and I told her to go to the toilet as I thought that may be her problem. When she returned she did not go to the toilet saying she didn't have to. Again she continued to play but shortly after this she returned again complaining of pain and at this point I decided she should stay in. I would say at this point it was around 17.46 hours and I made her a bed on the sofa. Raychel stated that the pain was around the area of her belly button. At around 18.30 hours I saw that Raychel was getting very grey about the face and I began to panic and tried to contact my husband who had not returned from work. I got Raychel into the car and I went and collected my husband from work and went straight to Accident and Emergency at Altnagelvin, as I was extremely worried about Raychel.. At Casualty, Raymond my husband carried Raychel into the cubicle as we were taken right away. A doctor began to examine Raychel and he stated that it could be a problem

with her appendix and he decided to give her some pain relief in the form of an injection. Shortly after this injection she began to brighten up and came back to herself. We arrived at A&E shortly after 7.00 p.m. The doctor left us with Raychel and returned a short time later stating that if her pain increased they would have to open her up and remove the appendix even if it did look healthy and normal, as this was procedure. I signed a consent form to allow the operation to go ahead. We waited in A&E for a while until a bed was available in the children's ward and when she was transferred to the children's ward she was still in good form. The doctor who was looking after Raychel in A&E said that it would be the early hours of the following morning before any operation could take place and that an Anaesthetist would have her examine her as well. When Raychel was settled in the children's ward we went home in order to get her some clothes as she was going to be staying. At about 22.50 hours and we had only been home about 10 minutes and the hospital rang saying that they needed us to return as they were taking Raychel to theatre. I accompanied Raychel to the theatre and she was still in good form. I asked the nurse why Raychel was going down to theatre so early but I can't remember her reply. I was with Raychel up until she fell asleep and went in for the operation. A nurse said that Raychel would be back on the ward within the hour, so at 00.30 hours on 08 06 2001 we returned to the Children's Ward waiting on Raychel. Raychel did not return until about 02.10 hours and I questioned a nurse as to the delay before she arrived and all I was told was that they had no word yet. When Raychel returned we were so glad to see her that we didn't ask what the delay had been. At 06.00 hours I left the hospital as Raychel had not wakened and my husband stayed. After a phone call at about 09.00 hours I returned to see Raychel, as she was now awake. Raychel was in bed and colouring in and told me that she had been sick. At about 12.00 hours I took Raychel to the toilet and as she was about to leave the toilet she began to vomit which was in large volume, she was bright red and came out in a cold sweat. She returned to bed and I informed a nurse that she had been sick but the nurse said that this was normal. As the day progressed she became sick more often and at one point she was vomiting bile on the bed and a nurse said



that her stomach was empty and she wouldn't be sick any more. We left the hospital at 15.00 hours and returned at approximately 15.45 hours and Raychel appeared listless and not her lively self. She continually vomited and later in the evening a doctor gave her an injection in her arm to stop her being sick, plus suppositories. Raychel continued to vomit bile and later on it turned to blood and again a nurse said that it was only natural. At around 21.30 hours my husband informed me that Raychel had vomited more blood and she was complaining of a really sore head. A nurse then gave Raychel what I was told was Paracetamol for pain relief. Raychel was bright red in the face. Then after the Paracetamol she continued to throw up, but a while later she settled and fell asleep. I believe that she was very weak. At about 00.40 hours both Raymond and I left advising the staff to ring if she woke up. At 03.45 hours Altnagelvin phoned and said that Raychel was having a seizure. Raymond went to the hospital and I returned shortly after him. Raychel was taken to another room by the staff. I did not see Raychel until about 04.50 hours. In the interim a Dr McCay told Raymond and I that Raychel was seriously ill and when we saw her we were advised that she would be going for a CAT scan. She had the scan and Dr McCay told us her brain was clear and that if he could get her sodium it would be better. Raychel was not responding to me and did not even know that we were there. Dr McCay said that Belfast had requested another scan and this was done. Dr McCay said that they saw a trickle of blood on the outside of her brain and that once a bed was free Raychel would go to the Royal Victoria Hospital. In the mean time she went to Intensive Care in Altnagelvin. A doctor in ICU with a beard said that she was very seriously ill and that there was a lot of pressure inside her head and that they would operate to reduce the pressure. We were told that it would take a week or two weeks before we knew what was wrong. Raychel lay on the bed lifeless and a priest anointed her. Raychel was taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital but she did not get any better. When we got to the Royal it was about half an hour later. When a doctor said that her brain had swollen to such an extent that there was little that they could do and that she was on a life support machine and getting medication to try and reduce the size of the brain and that they had to keep the machine on

for a certain period of time by law and then check Raychel the next day before they could switch it off. On Sunday 10 06 2001 a doctor advised that Raychel was brain dead and with my permission they would switch the machine off. I asked if it could be kept on a while longer but the doctor said there was no point and both my husband and I agreed a few hours later that it should be switched off. My husband is

Raymond Ferguson who works as a plasterer.

Mr. McAlinden: On the 8th she was brought in the morning until about 10 a.m. She had walked about. I carried her to the toilet at 12 noon and 2 p.m. At 8 p.m. Raychel was in the corridor with her brother. I left the hospital at just after 8 p.m. and returned at 10 p.m. I remained until about 12.40 a.m. the following morning, when we left Raychel appeared to be sleeping.

Mr. Foster: Before 8 a.m. on the 8th she told me she had vomited but she appeared well. Later in the morning she became quiet — from about 10.30/11 a.m. she did not talk to me, she was no longer colouring in, I said to the nurses that Raychel did not look too well. The nurse said Raychel could be given a cup full of 7 Up to drink. She was then sick for a second time. It was a large vomit.

TAKEN before me this 5th day of FEBRUARY 2003

*John Kelly*

Coroner for the District of Greater Belfast

(86)



CORONERS ACT (Northern Ireland), 1959

Deposition of Witness taken on \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_, at inquest touching the death of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, before me

Coroner for the District of \_\_\_\_\_

as follows to wit:—

The Deposition of MARIE FERGUSON

of \_\_\_\_\_

(Address)

who being sworn upon her oath, saith

She vomited her dinner from the day before. I carried her to the toilet because she did not look too well, her knees wobbled and she passed urine. I told the nurses she had been very sick. I am unaware of any referrals to a doctor. Afterwards she was very weak. I returned about 4 p.m. on the 8th and a lady told me that Raychel had been vomiting during my absence. I don't know if this lady told the nurses. At 4 p.m. she was in her bed, she remained lying in bed between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. I left at 3 p.m. returning at 4 p.m. and she was still in bed. She looked yellow and weak. She hadn't eaten anything nor had she drunk anything more. I saw no doctor come to her in relation to the sickness. A school friend visited her that evening along with her two brothers — about 6.50 p.m. Raychel was in bed then and appeared disinterested in them. This was not like Raychel. Since 10 a.m. I felt her condition had deteriorated noticeably. My husband phoned me at about 9.30 p.m. He was ~~22~~ 23

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? nicking. He said Raychel was vomiting blood and complaining of pain in her head. He told me the vomiting was continual. I got back to the hospital just after 10 p.m. She was lying in bed and there was fluid trickling from the side of her mouth. Blood was on the pillow. She was lying without opening her eyes. Her colour was very pale and she was very restless. I left the hospital at 12.40 a.m. That day I was with Raychel for 11/12 hours. The nurses told me she was vomiting because of the operation. A male doctor came in at one time with a nurse and gave Raychel something. I lived about 15 mins from Altnagelvin. My husband and I both drove and it was not difficult travelling to the hospital. We heard the phone ring at 3.50 a.m. on the 9th. My husband answered and as a result my husband went straight to the hospital. He phoned me about 15 mins later from the hospital. I arrived about 20 mins later by taxi. My husband was crying and said Raychel's heart had stopped and the staff were working with her. Between 9 a.m. on the 8th and 12.40 a.m. on the 9th no member of the medical staff (doctor) approached me. There were different nurses rather than a dedicated nurse and I was not asked for observations.

M. F. Gibson

TAKEN before me this 5th day of February 2003,

John. Lecky Coroner for the District of Greater Belfast

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