

The Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry  
Day 5

March 23, 1999

[1] Q: Did you expect to hear from the hospital about that?  
 [2] A: We assumed that a letter would come through from the  
 [3] hospital.  
 [4] Q: Did it?  
 [5] A: Not straightaway. With having three other children and  
 [6] the house and everything to sort out, I really wanted to  
 [7] know when it was going to happen so I phoned the  
 [8] hospital and spoke to Mr Dhasmana's secretary -  
 [9] Q: Pause for a moment. Do you remember when you phoned the  
 [10] hospital? You have given us the date of 15th June in  
 [11] your statement.  
 [12] A: Well then, that is when it was.  
 [13] Q: But you did not compile the statement at the time, so  
 [14] how do you know that was the date?  
 [15] A: I kept a diary from Day 1, when Oliver was born.  
 [16] Q: So that date comes from the diary?  
 [17] A: Yes, I have all the notes here. I kept everything.  
 [18] That is why I can be sure of the dates. I have it in  
 [19] note form and everything.  
 [20] Q: So you can be sure of the date. You phoned on the  
 [21] 15th. What were you told?  
 [22] A: She checked the listing and said Oliver was pencilled in  
 [23] for July and we would have a letter of confirmation. We  
 [24] received the letter about three days later.  
 [25] Q: What was the date?

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[1] Q: That is as far as you were concerned. What did you find  
 [2] out when you got there?  
 [3] A: Nothing for a long time. We got to the hospital, as  
 [4] I say, about 5 to 12 and filled in the necessary forms  
 [5] downstairs before we were shown up to the cardiac unit.  
 [6] Q: Just stop there for a moment. The way you describe it,  
 [7] it sounds as though you made some rush, some effort to  
 [8] get there by midday?  
 [9] A: We had three children to sort out. I had to get my  
 [10] brother-in-law home from work and my sister, they were  
 [11] moving into the house for the duration, to take care of  
 [12] the children. We had no transport, we did not have  
 [13] a car, so my father had to have time off work to take us  
 [14] to the hospital. We had to pack bags: it was just  
 [15] a nightmare, but we thought, "No, if it is going to be  
 [16] tomorrow, let us get it over with". As I say, we made  
 [17] it with five minutes to spare.  
 [18] Q: Then you were saying, with a certain edge to your voice,  
 [19] I think, that nothing happened for quite a while?  
 [20] A: No. We filled in a couple of forms down in reception,  
 [21] at the BRI, and then we were shown up to the cardiac  
 [22] unit, shown Oliver's cot and then literally left alone  
 [23] all afternoon and we just could not understand what was  
 [24] happening. Oliver's surgery was due to happen on the  
 [25] Friday morning, and we knew there were blood tests,

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[1] A: 20th July was his operation, but we were admitted on the  
 [2] Friday before that, on 16th July.  
 [3] Q: You deal in your statement - I am not going to ask you  
 [4] any more about it - with a consultation you had with  
 [5] Dr Martin between the phone call and the admission?  
 [6] A: Yes.  
 [7] Q: Because he repeated the nature of the operation; you  
 [8] understood what he said?  
 [9] A: Yes.  
 [10] Q: And you were comforted by it?  
 [11] A: Yes, he went over everything again and just wished us  
 [12] all the best, and said he was sure everything would be  
 [13] all right. He would see us when we were transferred  
 [14] back up to the Children's Hospital after.  
 [15] Q: Could I then take you to what happened when you actually  
 [16] went to the BRI on 15th July, as you had been told to  
 [17] report?  
 [18] A: We were actually told to report on the 16th July, on the  
 [19] Friday, but on the Thursday morning, about 10 o'clock,  
 [20] we had a phone call from the BRI to say that there was  
 [21] an opening and Mr Dhasmana would like to operate on  
 [22] Oliver on the Friday, so could we be at the hospital by  
 [23] the Thursday, by noon. We made it with five minutes to  
 [24] spare and as far as we were concerned, Oliver was going  
 [25] to be operated on on the Friday rather than the Tuesday.

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[1] probably an echocardiograph to do, ECG, everything and  
 [2] nothing was being done; we were just being totally  
 [3] ignored. Nobody explained anything to us, nobody  
 [4] introduced themselves to us, only the nursery nurse that  
 [5] actually came to fill out Oliver's admissions.  
 [6] Q: Was there a Heart Circle office?  
 [7] A: Yes. Oliver's cot, his little space, was situated right  
 [8] opposite the Heart Circle office, and we saw a lady  
 [9] during the course of the afternoon coming and going,  
 [10] appeared to be extremely busy. We assumed she was the  
 [11] Heart Circle counsellor for the parents, and the last we  
 [12] saw of her was about 5 o'clock when she locked the  
 [13] office door and went home. She did not introduce  
 [14] herself to us. We assume that is who it was. She did  
 [15] not introduce herself to us, so we were left literally  
 [16] stranded.  
 [17] Q: You knew there was going to be a counsellor there?  
 [18] A: Yes, we were told that by Helen Vegoda at the Children's  
 [19] Hospital, that there was a paediatric cardiac counsellor  
 [20] situated at the BRI.  
 [21] Q: Did you ever think of knocking at the door and saying -  
 [22] A: She was coming and going all afternoon, she was so busy.  
 [23] Q: So she gave the impression of being so busy that you did  
 [24] not get the chance?  
 [25] A: We never had eye contact with her. She could not fail

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