

The Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry
Day 5

March 23, 1999

[1] **A:** Yes, we were promised faithfully we could have that room
 [2] the night before Oliver's operation, so we could have
 [3] a bit of privacy and spend some time with Oliver.

[4] **Q:** I have asked you about the rooms. Let me ask you now
 [5] about Oliver's drugs. What time did Oliver normally
 [6] have his drugs?

[7] **A:** He had them twice a day, once in the morning, so
 [8] obviously we would give him his drugs in the morning
 [9] before he arrived in the hospital, and 8 o'clock in the
 [10] evening. He was on three different drugs.

[11] **Q:** So when 8 o'clock approached -

[12] **A:** Nothing. So my husband went to the reception desk and
 [13] asked, explained it was time for Oliver's drugs, could
 [14] they be drawn up, please, and basically, he was given
 [15] a free licence to go to the drugs cabinet himself: he
 [16] was given the key to go to the fridge and draw the drugs
 [17] there, give them to Oliver, and we just could not
 [18] believe it, that that would be allowed.

[19] At the Children's Hospital the drugs are drawn up
 [20] by the nurses, they sign for them. Oliver's drugs were
 [21] given by nasal tube or gastrostomy tube. We were
 [22] allowed to put them down the tube, but to actually draw
 [23] the drugs up and be given a key to the drugs cabinet, it
 [24] was unbelievable. We just could not believe that we
 [25] were allowed to do that.

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[1] in the fridge at home. From then on in we told the
 [2] nurses that we had Oliver's drugs from home and they
 [3] were kept in the fridge, and as and when it was Oliver's
 [4] drug time, my husband would go to whichever nurse was in
 [5] charge of the keys, she would hand the keys over, he
 [6] would go to the fridge, draw the drugs up and give
 [7] Oliver his drugs. That happened every time, until,
 [8] obviously we got into the ITU.

[9] **Q:** So in any event, with those various problems, the room,
 [10] the drugs and the timing of the operation, that was the
 [11] night of the 15th. Let us move forward to the next
 [12] day.

[13] Did anything in particular happen that you
 [14] recollect the next day?

[15] **A:** On the 16th, Oliver had all these tests. ECG, blood
 [16] tests, everything was beginning to work towards the
 [17] Tuesday. Round about mid-morning, Helen Stratton, the
 [18] counsellor, came over and she introduced herself to us
 [19] and I just tried to be really polite to her. I was
 [20] really embarrassed, I felt really uncomfortable. She
 [21] came over and neither of us said a word. She just
 [22] looked at my husband and basically, she said, "I know
 [23] you do not like me, I do not really care what you think
 [24] of me. A lot of parents have not liked me in the past,
 [25] it really does not bother me", and then she walked

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[1] **Q:** You make a complaint in your statement about the very
 [2] first mix of Digoxin?

[3] **A:** Yes. It was an adult dose.

[4] **Q:** You say adult dose, or mixture?

[5] **A:** My husband always dealt with Oliver's drugs, and he was
 [6] the one that always drew them up at home. I would have
 [7] to refer to the statement, because that was not me.
 [8] I did not draw them up.

[9] **Q:** So from what we read in the statement, let us have
 [10] a look at it. It is 125/15, witness 125, page 15, it is
 [11] the central paragraph:

[12] "It was now coming up to Oliver's drug time".

[13] This is your husband again talking?

[14] **A:** Yes.

[15] **Q:** He had gone to see the nurse. Around 15 minutes later
 [16] the nurse came and told him that Oliver's drugs were
 [17] ready and he had to go and get them.

[18] Then he discovered the Digoxin was not the
 [19] paediatric mixture but an adult mix?

[20] **A:** That is right.

[21] **Q:** By "mix", does he mean the form in which it came or the
 [22] actual quantity?

[23] MR DARBYSHIRE (from the floor): The form in which it came.

[24] **A:** We were just not happy with that, so we got on the phone
 [25] and asked my Dad to bring Oliver's drugs in. They were

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[1] away. Then she came back. Whether she had second
 [2] thoughts, I really do not know. She came back, invited
 [3] us into her office for a chat. My husband did not want
 [4] to go. He did not want to come but I asked him to.
 [5] I said "This is really embarrassing, let us go in and
 [6] hear what she has to say".

[7] She introduced herself and gave us a few leaflets
 [8] and basically told us nothing we had not already been
 [9] told by Helen Vegoda at the Children's Hospital, but by
 [10] then the damage had been done, because she should have
 [11] approached us on the day we were admitted, and she had
 [12] every opportunity to do so.

[13] **Q:** Was she the person you had seen the day before?

[14] **A:** Yes, our assumptions were right; it was the same woman.

[15] **Q:** When she came to see you, you had slept in her office
 [16] the night before?

[17] **A:** Yes.

[18] **Q:** How did the conversation actually begin? Did she say
 [19] "Hello, I am Helen Stratton", or was it just silence?

[20] **A:** She just sort of came over to us and she introduced
 [21] herself. I spoke to her. My husband had no intentions
 [22] of speaking to her, he was so disgusted with the fact
 [23] she had not introduced herself the day before.

[24] **Q:** It might not have been her fault, she might not have
 [25] been told you were coming?

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