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### Murder accusation



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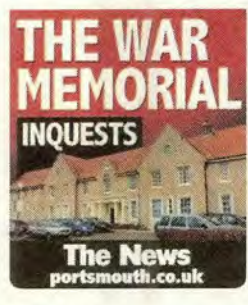
Charles Farthing said he confronted Dr Jane Barton when he discovered his step-father – former Second World War fighter pilot Brian Cunningham – was dying.

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# INQUEST: Son tells jury how he felt step-father was being 'intentionally executed'

## Man accused doctor of murdering relative



by Chris Owen  
Chief reporter

A RELATIVE of a man who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital told an inquest how he accused a doctor of murder.

Charles Farthing said he confronted Dr Jane Barton when he discovered his step-father Brian Cunningham was dying.

He told a jury he believed the 79-year-old had been 'intentionally executed' by staff at the hospital.

Giving evidence at Portsmouth Crown Court yesterday, Mr Farthing said his step-father - a former Second World War fighter pilot who suffered from Parkinson's disease - had gone into the hospital to have a severe bed sore treated.

The inquest heard how Mr Cunningham had been put on a machine called a syringe driver - which automatically pumps painkilling drug diamorphine into the body. Mr Farthing believes this caused his step-father's death five days after being admitted to the Gosport War Memorial.

Mr Farthing told the court he had been trying to see Dr Barton for several days to discuss the treatment but had been told she was unavailable.

He said he and his wife were at the hospital during Mr Cunningham's final hours.

'My wife and I remained at the hospital with Brian and while we were waiting Dr



Brian Cunningham with his mother Rhoda Stuart Cunningham



Charles Farthing

Barton finally made an appearance,' he said. 'I accused Dr Barton of murdering Brian and the interview was rapidly terminated.'

Alan Jenkins, the barrister representing Dr Barton at the hearings, accused Mr Farthing of being 'irrational'.

He said: 'You have accused Dr Barton of murder and it seems she brought the conversation to a close.

'Will you accept that there is not much to be said if one party considered you to be irrational?'

'You were then and you are now.'

Mr Farthing had earlier explained what happened the day his step-father was admitted - September 21, 1998.

He said: 'I went to see

Brian and was told by staff he was on the Dryad ward. During this exchange a male member of staff said "that is the death ward".'

'I thought that was an utterly irresponsible thing to say.'

When he saw his step-father he said he was 'absolutely shocked' to see him unconscious and on a syringe driver.

'I understood the implication immediately,' Mr Farthing told the inquest, which is probing the deaths of 10 patients at the hospital between 1996 and 1999.

'I was utterly appalled and asked for the syringe driver

to be stopped. This was refused.'

A nurse told Mr Farthing only a doctor could remove the syringe driver, the inquest heard.

'I was convinced Brian was being intentionally executed,' Mr Farthing said.

(Proceeding)

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Dr Jane Barton

## Inquest hears doctor introduced syringe drivers

It was Dr Jane Barton who introduced the use of syringe drivers and diamorphine at the Gosport War Memorial, the inquest heard.

Staff nurse Beverley Turnbull told the jury she had worked at the hospital since the late 1980s, about the same time as Dr Barton became a clinical assistant there.

Tom Leeper, a barrister representing the families of four of those who died there, asked Mrs Turnbull: 'Did the use of syringe drivers containing opiates coincide with the arrival of Dr Barton?'

She replied: 'It was her who introduced the syringe drivers and it was Dr Barton who introduced the use of diamorphine.'

Mrs Turnbull agreed with Alan Jenkins, the barrister representing Dr Barton, that the new system was brought in to relieve pain for the terminally ill.

The nurse, who is still working at the hospital, echoed concerns already raised at the inquests, that staff were not trained properly to use the drivers.

They raised the issue in 1991 and

meetings were held at the hospital which resulted in training.

Mrs Turnbull said: 'Myself and other colleagues were a bit concerned about the use of syringe drivers containing controlled drugs like diamorphine. We raised these concerns with other members of staff and they were resolved by 1996.'

The inquests are dealing with the deaths of patients who died between 1996 and 1999.

## Woman fought off burglar in her home

A WOMAN was left shaken and bruised after she fought off a burglar in her own home.

The 64-year-old victim, from Cosham, was confronted by an intruder when she heard a noise in her conservatory at about 8pm on Thursday.

She had gone to investigate when she found a man who had climbed through a window.

He went to leave but the woman barred his way and he then demanded her handbag.

A struggle followed and when she shouted for help two neighbours came to her aid.

The offender then ran off, empty-handed, towards Hawthorn Crescent but was later arrested.

Detective Inspector Nigel Oliver, of the priority crime unit, said: 'This was a shocking incident which left the victim very shaken.'

'She also received slight bruising to her arms as a result of this incident.'

'I am appealing for anyone who saw or heard anything in the area of Windsor Road or Hawthorn Crescent or saw a man in a red hooded jacket acting suspiciously in the Cosham area, to come forward and speak to us.'

A 38-year-old man from Portsmouth has been arrested on suspicion of burglary.

Anyone with any information should contact the Priority Crime Unit at Southsea police station on 0845 045 45 45 or call Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

## Lily's Smile for the Isle

LILY Allen has been added to this year's Bestival line up.

The singer, whose hits include *Smile* and *The Fear*, joins German electropop veterans Kraftwerk, Massive Attack, Klaxons and MGMT for the Isle Of Wight event over the weekend of September 11 to 13.

Other acts added to the bill include Orbital, La Roux, Jack Penate, Just Jack, Crazy P and Pretty Things. Fleet Foxes, Seasick Steve, Friendly Fires and Bat For Lashes are already signed up to the Robin Hill Country Park.

## Bike accident

A 17-YEAR-OLD has been taken to hospital with head injuries after being knocked off his bike by a passing car.

The teenager was riding on a bicycle along Portsdown Hill Road, near the junction with Crookhorn Lane, Purbrook, when he collided with a Skoda Octavia at 12.15pm.

He was taken to Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham with head injuries, which are not life-threatening.



For more on the Gosport War Memorial inquests see [portsmouth.co.uk/gosportinquests](http://portsmouth.co.uk/gosportinquests)