

The long goodbye: the deaths of nancy cruzan



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HI 429 November 14, 2007 The Long Goodbye: The Deaths of Nancy Cruzan
Part 3: From Joyce Cruzan's Perspective I never thought the day would come that I would want a child of mine to die instead of live. Nancy is in a place of no return and I pray to God everyday that he would allow her to die and stop her suffering. It is so difficult to look at her and only see a shell of a human being that use to be my daughter. I only wish that the government and the rehab hospital would mind their own business and let this situation be handled by our family. Everyday I sit at home in the kitchen waiting for Joe to call when he got off of work. He wanted to know about any news on the case and to check what came in the mail.

It was the highlight of our day and the most disappointing part of our day. Everyday when Joe came home from work he would take the mail into the basement to read and respond to it. After the start of the first of many trials and court appearances the amount of our mail increased ten-fold at least. All the media attention did not help the situation, it allowed for more and more people, radicals, and interest groups to voice their opinion about our private family matter. At this point Joe would call the lawyer's office everyday in an attempt to find out when the judge would make his decision and how we would be notified of his decision.

We receive a memo from the lawyer's office about a woman who claims that Nancy talked to her. This memo angered me to the point that I wanted to slap that woman for lying on my baby. She even had the nerve to lie and say that she had a recording for Nancy speaking, but after an investigation it was determined that it was her own voice. Crackpots came out of the woodwork to either damage or support our cause. I can remember as plain as day when

the first decision was handed down by Judge Teel. The PBS crew was at the house waiting to film our reaction to the decision.

We were all nervous when a member of the judge's staff came to the house to hand deliver the verdict. The large envelop was filled with pages of words that really did not make much sense to us, we really needed a translator. I just wanted Joe to spit it out, whatever the verdict was I just wanted him to read between the lines and just tell us. Finally, Joe read the important part stating that the hospital was directed to withdraw nutrition and hydration from Nancy according to our wishes as co-guardians.

The room fell silent no one really knew what to say. All the while I was thinking that this is just a small step and that with every step there will be someone there trying to push us backwards. Joe called our attorney to get his interpretation of the verdict. It troubled him that the Judge Teel described Nancy's condition as " unresponsive and hopeless" with " no cognitive purpose for her except sound and perhaps pain. If Nancy feels pain then she is not in a persistent vegetative state (PVS).

We did not know what was going on behind the scenes, but later it would all come to light. Our case bypassed the appellate court of Missouri and headed straight to the Missouri Supreme Court, with a little assistance. Our case was scheduled for review in September, along with a case that has opposite opinions as ours. In other words, the parents of a young man named Phillip Radar, that was diagnosed as being brain dead, did not want to let their child go, but the hospital caring for him did. Phillip's heart was beating even though he was brain dead.

Both of the cases were scheduled to be heard on the same morning in September, but on August 31st Phillip's heart stopped and the effort to revive him was unsuccessful. His death left our case as the only one to be argued. After our day in the Missouri Supreme Court all we could do was wait on the judgment to be handed down. The verdict was against us, and we cried and cried.

Our only option left was to petition the court to rehear our case and even that was denied. We discussed our other options and the only path was to the United States Supreme Court, and await their decision.