

Miles Ferguson Not Guilty



Janet Blackmon Morgan ■ The Sun News, Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Defense attorney Morgan Martin, left, and Miles Ferguson cry and embrace after the not guilty verdict in the homicide by child abuse trial on Wednesday at the Horry County Courthouse in South Carolina.

By FRANK LEWIS
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Not guilty. That was the verdict returned by a Horry County, S.C., jury after a short deliberation Wednesday in the case of Portsmouth resident, Miles Ferguson.

The 27-year-old father was accused of homicide by child abuse in the death of his 5-week-old daughter, Mylee Grace Ferguson on Aug. 2, 2007, while the family was vacationing in Myrtle Beach.

Jurors reached their decision after more than four hours of deliberation, ending a more than week-long trial.

According to a story by reporter Tonya Root of the *Myrtle Beach Sun News*, when the verdict was read, Ferguson began to sob, then turned to the jury and mouthed the words — “thank you.”

That “thank you” also came from Ferguson’s attorney, Morgan Martin.

“I was elated and relieved,” Martin told the *Portsmouth Daily Times*. “It does restore your faith in the jury system because Miles Ferguson was not guilty of killing his baby. And the fact that a lengthy trial led a jury to that conclusion is a good feeling.”

Many supporters from the Scioto

County area, who packed the court room every day of the trial, began to weep and applaud when the verdict was announced.

“I think what says more than anything is that they probably had 150 to 200 people here for a 10-day period of time to stand by in sun and rain. All of them couldn’t get into the court house, there wasn’t room for them, to support Miles,” Martin told the *Times*. “How many people could you get to follow you 10 hours from home? That says a lot.”

Martin was impressed with Ferguson early in their relationship.

“It became clear to me early on that Miles and Ashley Ferguson, and both his parents and their parents and their extended family are simply good people,” Martin said. “If you had an hour with Miles Ferguson, and you could talk to him, you would get a sense that he is a humble, loving family man. And you would have no doubt the baby was sick and he (Ferguson) was a victim of circumstances.”

Earlier, during closing arguments, Martin told jurors that Mylee, who was named after her father, suffered a brain hemorrhage at birth and that caused her death.

Martin commented on the news media coverage Ferguson had received throughout the entire

ordeal.

“They’ve lived with this for two years with his picture in a jump suit — ‘Man charged with killing his baby’ — that’s a damned lie,” Martin said.

The nightmare for the Ferguson family began when the baby stopped breathing on July 29, 2007, at a Myrtle Beach hotel. The child was taken to an area hospital, then taken by a life-flight to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, where she died.

Shortly afterwards local law enforcement arrested Ferguson charging the baby had died from shaken baby syndrome.

That is where the first controversy in the case occurred. Some physicians in that region even disagreed with the diagnosis, saying they didn’t even believe there is such a syndrome. However, other doctors maintained the charge, and both sides called expert witnesses in the trial.

Wednesday both sides completed closing arguments, and by 5 p.m. the judge in the case charged the jury, then sent them to deliberate.

Tonya Root, *Myrtle Beach Sun News* contributed to this story.

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