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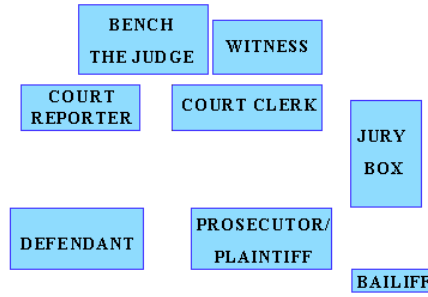
# Flea

One Pediatrician's Perspective

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Tuesday, April 24, 2007

## Flea Takes a Screen Test



Flea spent most of the day in his attorney's office. A well-known jury preparation expert had been brought into town to teach Flea how to be examined by a hostile plaintiff's attorney.

Flea was shown a diagram of the courtroom similar to this one. There is a subtle yet important difference to what is shown here: In Massachusetts, the defendant himself does not sit at the "defendant table". Flea was instructed to find a seat in the front row of the gallery on the right as close to the jury as possible.

Flea will probably be the plaintiff's first witness. He was instructed to angle his chair slightly toward the jury, and to keep his claws folded in his lap. He was instructed to turn his head toward the plaintiff's attorney while answering questions, then to turn to face the jury

and answer slowly, separating words, and loudly enough for the farthest juror to hear. Answers should be kept to no more than three sentences.

With that introduction, Flea's instructor set up a camera and we tried it out. With the camera rolling, Flea turned his head toward the "plaintiff's attorney" and heard generic questions about Pediatrics. Then he turned his head back toward the "jury" that he was facing and answered in slow, measured sentences. Most of the time, he exceeded the three-sentence limit. We'll have to work on that.

Finally, Flea was given a DVD of his screen test and a script to practice the head turning and slow-question-answering-thing daily until trial date.

Along the way, Flea was given some fascinating insights as to what makes juries tick. More on this later.

Posted by Flea at 4:29 PM

Labels: malpractice

15 comments:

[Chrysalis Angel](#) said...

I so feel for you going through this Flea. I'm surprised you were told to keep your hands folded. I have no law experience, but I wondered why they wouldn't let you show your palms up at all. Usually if you see palms up and open a bit, they are being open and truthful with you. Could be they feel it would look to pleading. I would think eye contact is crucial as well. Yes, answers to a minimum, less to be misinterpreted. I only know of one Dr. that went through this and that's what they told him. Short and sweet.

[Tue Apr 24, 07:26:00 PM EDT](#)

[Crystal](#) said...

I'm pretty new to your blog, and I tend to read in fits and starts.

I'd love to be able to send you good wishes when this all starts.... Any guess when that will be? I haven't found the beginning of this story as of yet.

It would seem to me pediatricians should be the best prepared for something like this of all the specialties, anyone who can work well with children and earn the trust of parents ought to have all the skills needed to relate well to a jury.

Unfortunately that's probably cold comfort. Better not to have to go through this process at all.

For some reason reading your blog makes my foggy brain comprehend just a bit, so sadly, I'm probably going to read the whole thing. It's the closest I've gotten to normal brain function in years, and I kinda miss the feeling.... 37 is too young for a whacked out brain, dontcha think? But what a boost for your doctor ego, you heal autoimmune affected brains just by your internet presence! Top that Dr. House....

Figure if I'm reading, maybe I can be useful or something. Another feeling I sorely miss. :)

[Tue Apr 24, 07:55:00 PM EDT](#)

[Shazam!](#) said...

Flea, This sounds like the biggest waste of your time. I hope you do well in your practicing and on game day so you can move on to that which you love.

[Tue Apr 24, 10:50:00 PM EDT](#)

[Bryan](#) said...

Be prepared for the plaintiff attorney to tell you how brilliant you are before he drags you down to his level. Godspeed my child

[Wed Apr 25, 12:06:00 AM EDT](#)

[CholeraJoe](#) said...

I was also coached to smile at the jury and not talk down to them. In my rape trial...er let me rephrase that. In the rape trial in which I testified about examining the alleged victim, visual aids were very important in convincing the jury of the forcible nature of the act.

Good luck, flea.

[Wed Apr 25, 10:11:00 AM EDT](#)

[Anonymous](#) said...

welcome to the woodshed -- I'd recommend that you be as likable as possible (not arrogant), communicate how your

### About Me



Flea

Flea is a pediatrician in solo practice in the Northeast U.S.

[View my complete profile](#)

### Flea's Illness Counter

2006 10

2007 6

### Blog Archive

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- Dress Rehearsal
- [A Witness for the Prosecution](#)
- Suppose They Gave PGR and Nobody Came?
- QED
- Hellooooo Monkey Girl!

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- Over My Med Body
- Parenting Solved
- Pediatricsinfo.com
- Point and Shoot
- Tales From the Womb
- The Pediatrician is In
- The World According to Meg
- Unintelligent Design
- Vince Ianelli, MD
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### Autism Blogs

- Autism Diva
- Autism Street
- Autism Vox
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- The Autism Acceptance Project
- Unstrange Minds

### Real Docs

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