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Perth Woman Avoids Jail for Baby Corpse Fraud

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– Categories: Crime



A 35-year-old woman from Perth has avoided jail time after being sentenced for interfering with a corpse and defrauding the public through a false fundraising campaign.

Monique Ellen Burton was handed a 12-month suspended sentence by the Perth District Court on Friday after admitting to hiding the body of her newborn baby in a garbage bag behind a couch. The baby was reportedly born at home after Burton concealed her pregnancy from her partner and others.

In addition to the charge of interfering with a corpse, Burton also pleaded guilty to 11 counts of fraud. She had received more than \$3,000 through a GoFundMe campaign set up by a friend who falsely believed she was suffering from a terminal illness. Burton did not correct the misunderstanding and accepted the donations.

Judge Darren Renton, while delivering the sentence, acknowledged the seriousness of the offences but noted that Burton's conduct lacked sophistication and appeared to be driven more by panic and naivety than by deliberate malice.

"It was by a bare margin that the sentence was suspended," the judge stated. "While your actions were serious, they fall on the lower end of the scale in terms of criminality."

The court heard that Burton had been experiencing significant personal challenges at the time, including psychological distress. These factors were taken into consideration during sentencing.

The fraud charges were linked to several financial transactions and misrepresentations made to obtain funds under false pretences. While the court recognised the deceit involved, it also acknowledged that Burton had not initiated the fundraiser herself but had allowed it to continue once it began.

The body of the infant was discovered after Burton confided in someone close to her, who then alerted authorities. A forensic investigation confirmed the remains were of a newborn, but the exact cause of death could not be determined due to the state of decomposition.

Burton's legal representative told the court she is remorseful and has since engaged in counselling and support services. The suspended sentence means she will not serve time in custody unless she breaches the conditions of the court order.

The case has drawn public attention due to the disturbing nature of the offence and the misuse of public generosity. Legal experts say it highlights ongoing concerns around online fundraising platforms and the need for greater transparency.