

**AMENDED**

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

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**Report Release Date: October 9, 2008**

**Review of the Death of Dezaræ Jordan Willeford  
of Beckham County, Oklahoma**

**Dates and Outcome of Investigations and Actions Taken by the Beckham County Department of Human Services; Actions Taken by the Beckham County District Attorney; Dates and Summary of Judicial Proceedings and Rulings of the Beckham County District Court**

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**General Information**

On July 15, 2008, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the death of Dezaræ Jordan Willeford. The child died on July 8, 2008. On July 9, 2008, a criminal felony charge of Murder in the First Degree-Child Abuse was filed against Andy David Creswell, the boyfriend of Dezaræ's mother. The following is a summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS); the actions taken by the district attorney; judicial proceedings; and the rulings of the court, as authorized by 10 O.S., Section 7005-1.9, B, D, and E (below).

**Authorization**

Title 10, Section 7005-1.9, B, D, and E, of the Oklahoma Statutes, states:

B. In cases involving the death or near death of a child when a person responsible for the child has been charged by information or indictment with committing a crime resulting in the death or near death of the child, there shall be a presumption that the best interest of the public will be served by public disclosure of certain information concerning the circumstances of the investigation of the death or near death of the child and any other investigations within three (3) years of the death or near-death and one (1) year after the death or near-death concerning that child, or other children while living in the same household.

D. 1. At any time subsequent to seven (7) days after the date the person responsible for the child has been criminally charged, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth shall, upon request, release certain information to the public within sixty (60) days of the request as follows:

a. a confirmation shall be provided by the Commission as to whether a report of suspected child abuse or neglect has been made concerning the alleged victim or other children while living in the same household and whether an investigation has begun,

b. confirmation shall be provided by the Commission as to whether previous reports of suspected child abuse or neglect have been made and the dates thereof, a summary of those previous reports, the dates and outcome of any investigations or actions taken by the Department [OKDHS] and the Commission in response to any previous report of child abuse or neglect, and the specific recommendation made to the district attorney and any subsequent action taken by the district attorney,

c. the dates of any judicial proceedings prior to the death or near death of the child,

d. recommendations submitted by the Department [OKDHS] and the Commission shall be provided in writing including recommendations made at the hearing as they relate to custody or placement of a child, and

e. the rulings of the court.

2. Specific recommendations made by the Commission described in any progress reports of a pending case submitted to the court may be disclosed by the Commission.

E. Any disclosure of information pursuant to this section shall not identify or provide an identifying description of any complainant or reporter of child abuse or neglect, and shall not identify the name of the child victim's siblings or other children living in the same household, the parent or other person responsible for the child or any other member of the household, other than the person criminally charged.

**Identifiers:**

Child's Name: Dezarae Jordan Willeford

Date of Birth: December 28, 2006

Alleged Perpetrator: Andy Creswell

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth did not become aware of this case until after Dezarae's death.

## **Summary of Actions Taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services; Actions Taken by the District Attorney; Judicial Proceedings; and the Rulings of the Court:**

The OJSO reviewed the OKDHS child welfare case history on the family prior to and including the death of Dezaræ Willeford. The OKDHS documentation included six referrals related to Dezaræ.

### First Referral (October 25, 2005)

The OKDHS received a referral on October 25, 2005, regarding Dezaræ and her mother. The reporter stated that Dezaræ had been born prematurely and was at extremely high risk for developing Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) [a potentially blinding eye disorder that primarily affects premature infants]. Reportedly, Dezaræ needed to be monitored weekly for ROP, and, allegedly, Dezaræ's mother had failed to take Dezaræ to her scheduled doctor's appointment.

The referral was assigned as a Priority II investigation to be initiated within seven days.

The OKDHS documented that the child welfare worker attempted to make contact with the family on October 28, 2005. The worker left a contact letter at the family home on October 28, 2005, requesting that Dezaræ's mother contact the OKDHS office. The OKDHS documented that the mother called the OKDHS office later that day. According to OKDHS documentation, Dezaræ's mother denied missing any doctor appointments for the child, but that she did have to reschedule one appointment. Documentation indicated the mother stated that the receptionist must not have communicated to the nurses about the rescheduled appointment.

The OKDHS documented six other attempts by the child welfare worker to contact and locate Dezaræ's mother. According to OKDHS documentation, the worker had no other communication with the mother.

The OKDHS contacted OKDHS Family Support Services, the power company, and the apartment where the family lived and was told the family had "skipped out". The worker then contacted the doctor's office and learned that Dezaræ had made every appointment since the date of the referral. The OKDHS closed the investigation on December 24, 2005, as Unable to Locate the family.

### Second Referral (October 27, 2005)

The OKDHS received a second referral on October 27, 2005, regarding Dezaræ and her mother. The reporter stated that Dezaræ had been born prematurely and was at extremely high risk for developing ROP. Allegedly, Dezaræ had failed to make a doctor's appointment that morning to monitor her for ROP. The reporter stated that another appointment had been scheduled for Dezaræ for the morning of October 28,

2005, and there was concern Dezaræe would go blind if she did not make the appointment.

The referral was screened out with the documented reason as Duplicate Report.

Third Referral (November 13, 2007, at 9:30 a.m.)

The OKDHS received a referral on November 13, 2007, regarding Dezaræe, her sibling, her mother, and Andy Creswell. The OKDHS documented that the reporter alleged that Dezaræe and her older sibling were being left unsupervised in the care of Dezaræe's aunt. The reporter stated the aunt's children had been removed from her home in another state, allegedly after the aunt's husband had sexually molested the oldest child. Reportedly, the aunt's children were living with their biological father, and the aunt was not to be allowed around any children. Allegedly, the home that Dezaræe and her family lived in was always messy, the back porch was full of junk, and the shed had rats in it.

The referral was assigned as a Priority II assessment with nine days to initiate the assessment. The OKDHS documented that an investigation was not conducted of the allegations in the referral.

The OKDHS documented that the child welfare worker initiated the assessment on November 20, 2007. The worker made three attempts to contact the family to conduct the assessment. The OKDHS mailed a contact letter to the family home on December 14, 2007, in an attempt to contact the family. According to OKDHS documentation, the family never contacted the OKDHS. The child welfare worker documented that she was able to verify with other DHS workers who knew the family that the family did reside at the address that had been given to the OKDHS. The assessment was closed on December 26, 2007, as Failure to Cooperate.

Fourth Referral (November 13, 2007, at 2:20 p.m.)

The OKDHS received another referral on November 13, 2007, regarding Dezaræe, her sibling, her mother, and Andy Creswell. Allegedly, Dezaræe's aunt was being allowed to watch Dezaræe and her older sibling. Reportedly, the aunt's children had been removed from her home in another state, allegedly after her husband had sexually molested the oldest child. The reporter had stated that the aunt's children were living with their biological father, and that the aunt was not to be allowed around any children.

Allegedly, Dezaræe's aunt had videotaped her husband as he molested her oldest child. Reportedly, Dezaræe's aunt had recently bought a video camera, and the caller was concerned that the aunt was going to make new child pornography videos.

The referral was screened out with the documented reason as Duplicated Report.

#### Fifth Referral (January 9, 2008)

The OKDHS received a referral on January 9, 2008, regarding Dezaræ, her sibling, her mother, and Andy Creswell. Allegedly, Dezaræ and her sibling were being left in the care of Dezaræ's aunt. The OKDHS documented that the aunt's children had been removed from her home, allegedly after the aunt's husband had sexually molested the aunt's oldest child. Reportedly, the aunt's children were living with their biological father, and the aunt was not to be allowed around any children.

The referral was screened out with the documented reason as Duplicated Report.

#### Sixth Referral (July 8, 2008)

The OKDHS received a referral on July 8, 2008, regarding Dezaræ and Andy Creswell. The reporter stated that Dezaræ had died in an apartment in Beckham County, Oklahoma. Reportedly, Dezaræ's mother was in the hospital for unknown reasons; Dezaræ's sibling was living with a grandparent in the Oklahoma metro area; and Andy Creswell was living in the family's home in Beckham County, Oklahoma.

The referral was assigned as a Priority I investigation to be initiated within 24 hours.

The OKDHS initiated an investigation within one hour of assignment. According to OKDHS documentation, the Oklahoma State Medical Examiner found that Dezaræ had died from "blunt force trauma to the head." Upon investigation, Andy Creswell admitted to administering an incorrect dosage of Ibuprofen to Dezaræ and then to "brutally beating" her. At the time of Dezaræ's death, her mother was hospitalized and had left Dezaræ in the care of her live-in boyfriend, Andy Creswell. Dezaræ's sibling was being cared for by the child's maternal grandmother while the children's mother was hospitalized.

#### Criminal Felony Charges Filed (July 9, 2008)

A criminal felony charge of Murder in the First Degree-Child Abuse was filed on July 9, 2008, against Andy Creswell, in connection to the death of Dezaræ Willeford.