

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

Public Report Release Date: October 2, 2008

**Review of the Death of Jason Hall
of Tulsa County, Oklahoma**

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

General Information

On August 20, 2008, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report on the death of Jason Hall. The twenty-month-old child had died on August 19, 2008, in Tulsa County. A criminal felony of First Degree Murder charge was filed on August 28, 2008, against Larry Neeley, the live-in boyfriend of Jason's biological mother. The following is a summary of the actions taken by the 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. §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: Jason Hall
Date of birth: December 29, 2006

Alleged perpetrator: Larry Neeley

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

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

Referral 1 (August 19, 2008)

The OKDHS received a referral on August 19, 2008, at 10:21 a.m. reporting the child death of Jason Hall. Allegedly, Jason had died earlier in the morning while in the care of Larry Neeley, the boyfriend of Jason's mother. Reportedly, the cause of death was not known at the time. The OKDHS documented that the reporter had stated that the biological mother and Neeley had spoken with law enforcement, but that Child Welfare Services had not interviewed the biological mother and Neeley yet. According to OKDHS documentation, law enforcement placed the three other children living in the home (two siblings and the alleged perpetrator's child) into OKDHS custody. The OKDHS documented that there were no known injuries to the surviving children.

The OKDHS documented that the reporter had stated that Jason was "okay", prior to his mother leaving to go to work the morning of his death. Allegedly, Neeley found Jason dead about ten minutes after the mother left. The OKDHS documented that Jason was transported to a local hospital on August 19, 2008, where he was pronounced dead.

The OKDHS documented the OKDHS interviews with the three surviving children on August 19, 2008, at the Justice Center in Tulsa. According to documentation, the OKDHS also spoke briefly with Jason's biological mother and Neeley.

The OKDHS documented that in an interview with a law enforcement officer, Neeley confessed to causing Jason's death. The officer reported that Neeley said he had gone into the child's room and saw him climbing the ladder to the top bunk bed. Reportedly, Neeley grabbed Jason by the arm and pulled him down, causing the child to hit the side of the dresser. According to the officer, Neeley then slammed Jason down onto the floor and left him there. Neeley then left the room and when he returned, the child was still on the floor and was not breathing normally. The OKDHS documented that Neeley told the officer that he called Jason's biological mother before calling 911. Reportedly, Neeley told the officer that he and the biological mother had been fighting and had not spoken to each other that morning. According to the officer, the Medical Examiner had determined that the child's cause of death was blunt force trauma to the abdomen.

The OKDHS made a finding of Confirmed-Court Intervention Requested regarding the allegations of Threat of Harm and Child Death against Neeley and a finding of Confirmed-Services Recommended regarding Threat of Harm against Jason's biological mother. The OKDHS also made a finding of Services Recommended regarding the child's death.

According to OKDHS documentation, Neeley's biological child was placed in the custody of the child's biological mother on August 19, 2008. The OKDHS documented that one of Jason's siblings was placed in the custody of the child's biological father on

August 21, 2008. According to documentation authored by the OKDHS worker, Jason had died from blunt force trauma to the abdomen while in Neeley's care and that Neeley had moved into the mother's home after knowing the mother for one month. The worker documented that at the time of Jason's death, the biological mother and Neeley had been involved in a relationship for six months. The OKDHS worker recommended that OKDHS continue the custody of Jason's other sibling and that a petition be filed to adjudicate the child as Deprived.

Referral 2 (August 19, 2008)

The OKDHS received a second referral on August 19, 2008, at 10:21 a.m., reporting the child death of Jason Hall. The same allegations were stated as in the first referral of August 19, 2008.

The OKDHS investigation remained open.

Referral 3 (August 19, 2008)

The OKDHS received a third referral on August 19, 2008, at 4:22 p.m., regarding the family. The OKDHS documented that the reporter stated Jason's biological mother had two other children, and that none of the mother's three children were the biological children of Neeley. According to the reporter, Jason lived with his biological mother, his two siblings, Neeley, and Neeley's biological child. The OKDHS documented that Jason's two siblings and Neeley's biological child had been removed from the biological mother's and Neeley's care earlier in the day and were placed into OKDHS custody.

According to OKDHS documentation, the reporter stated that the biological mother had left Jason in the care of Neeley while she went to work. Neeley's biological child was also in Neeley's care at the time. The OKDHS documented that according to the reporter, Neeley found Jason lying on his back on the floor, unconscious and barely breathing. Reportedly, Neeley called Jason's mother at work and said that Jason was not breathing. According to OKDHS documentation, the reporter stated that Jason's mother told Neeley to call 911. Reportedly, Jason was taken to a local hospital, where staff worked to resuscitate the child for an hour before he was pronounced dead. The OKDHS documented that the determination of the cause and manner of the child's death was pending and the Medical Examiner's office was checking into the possibility that the cause of death was of a suspicious nature.

This referral was screened-out without investigation. The OKDHS documented that it was a duplicate referral.

Referral 4 (August 19, 2008)

The OKDHS received another referral at 4:22 p.m. on August 19, 2008, regarding the family. The same information was provided as in Referral 3 that was received on August 19, 2008.

This referral was screened-out without investigation. The OKDHS documented that it was a duplicate referral.