

## Office of Juvenile System Oversight

# REVIEW OF THE NEAR DEATH OF R.H. MARSHALL COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Report Release Date: May 2, 2024

## OVERVIEW

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request regarding the near-death of two-month-old R.H. On June 14, 2021, the Marshall County District Attorney filed against the biological mother, McKala Ramsey, a felony charge of Child Neglect and two counts of Child Abuse. On November 21, 2022, Ms. Ramsey entered a plea of guilty. She was sentenced to five years under the custody of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. On June 14, 2021, the Marshall County District Attorney filed against the biological father, Kevin Henry, a felony charge of Child Neglect and two counts of Child Abuse. On September 7, 2022, Mr. Henry entered a plea of guilty. He was sentenced to 20 years with all but the first five years suspended under the custody of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

## IDENTIFIERS

Child's Name:	Age at Time of Incident:	Date of Near-Death Incident:
R.H.	Two Months Old	June 11, 2021
Person Responsible for Child (PRFC):	Additional Identifiers:	
McKala Ramsey Kevin Henry	Sibling One: Twelve Months Old Sibling Two: Two Years Old	

## ACTIONS

The release of the following summary of the actions taken by Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and the proceedings in the district court is authorized by Title 10A O.S. § 1-6-105H.

The OJSO did not become aware of this case until after the near death of R.H.

## NEAR-DEATH INCIDENT

On June 10, 2021, the OKDHS office in Marshall County received the near-death report regarding R.H. Reportedly, the parents called Emergency Management Services (EMS) while taking two-month-old R.H. to a medical facility because R.H. was not breathing. EMS and law enforcement met the parents halfway to the medical facility. It was reported that EMS performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on R.H. and that R.H. was unconscious. EMS transported R.H. to a medical facility. It was reported that law enforcement observed R.H. as "severely malnourished." It was reported that R.H. weighed four pounds at the age of two months.

- The OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority I Investigation.

## INVESTIGATION

The persons interviewed during the investigation included the biological mother, McKala Ramsey, the biological father, Kevin Henry, and various third parties.

On June 10, 2021, the OKDHS documented that they made a joint response with law enforcement. The OKDHS documented that a medical professional stated that R.H. had stopped breathing and had an unstable heart rate, low blood count, and low glucose levels. R.H. had to be sedated and intubated. The OKDHS documented that when medical professionals were preparing R.H. for intubation, they observed a sticky red substance in R.H.'s mouth, which they felt looked like Benadryl. Medical professionals also observed that R.H. had a foul odor, skin breakdown on the genitals, a pressure sore on the bottom, severe cradle cap, loose skin, and no muscle mass.

The OKDHS documented that when R.H. was born, R.H. tested positive for marijuana and weighed seven pounds fourteen ounces. The OKDHS stated that R.H. weighed six pounds when they initiated the investigation on June 10, 2021. That weight was measured after medical professionals had started R.H. on intravenous fluids.

The OKHS documented that R.H. was so malnourished that R.H. could not be fed formula until June 21, 2021. Medical professionals were cautious not to induce refeeding syndrome, which could have led to further medical complications for R.H.

The OKDHS documented Ms. Ramsey stated that R.H. was malnourished because R.H. had been throwing up each time R.H. ate. The OKDHS documented that since R.H. had started feeding by both bottle and through a tube while in the medical facility, R.H. did not have any issues with throwing up and was not on any medications to keep R.H. from throwing up.

The OKDHS documented that medical professionals found no reason for R.H. to be malnourished other than lack of nutrition.

On June 10, 2021, the OKDHS documented that they observed Sibling One and Sibling Two. During the visit, the OKDHS documented that both children were dirty, their clothing was too large for them, and their clothing was inappropriate as it was very hot that day. The yard contained trash, sharp objects, animal feces, and other debris. Sibling One and Sibling Two were not wearing shoes and walked barefoot through the yard and the home.

The OKDHS documented that while they were in the home, a "small area built with dog fencing/gate was observed and resembled a cage with no top. The area had a bed inside, on the floor was dog feces, and a dog was locked in this area." The OKDHS documented the parents stated that was where Sibling One and Sibling Two slept and played. The OKDHS documented the "home was observed to be filthy, have a strong odor of animal feces and urine, to have trash, animal feces, and dirty clothes lying on the floor. The home had several dogs, both large and small, including a litter of puppies. It has been reported a total of 14 dogs lived inside the home."

The OKDHS documented the parents stated R.H. slept in a Pack 'n Play in the parents' room. The OKDHS documented, "The Pack 'n Play is full of dirty clothes and has a board over the top. On top of the board is an infant swing. Mom reports putting R.H. in the swing so [R.H.] can watch T.V. The OKDHS documented Ms. Ramsey stated the board was in place to keep the dogs out.

On June 10, 2021, the OKDHS was granted emergency custody of R.H., Sibling One, and Sibling Two.

The OKDHS documented that upon emergency custody being granted, Sibling One and Sibling Two were observed to have multiple bruises on the lower extremities of their bodies. Sibling One and Sibling Two were seen by a medical professional who determined the bruises resulted from physical abuse.

The OKDHS documented that when Ms. Ramsey was interviewed by law enforcement, she was inconsistent with her statements regarding the day's events. Ms. Ramsey stated at different times that when she woke R.H. to feed R.H., that's when she first noticed R.H. was "gasping for air." Ms. Ramsey stated when hearing R.H. gasping for air, she picked R.H. up and started to push on R.H.'s tummy to help R.H. breathe. Ms. Ramsey felt like this helped. Ms. Ramsey stated she gave R.H. some Pedialyte and thought R.H. was doing better. Ms. Ramsey stated that later, R.H. started gasping for air again. That was when she contacted Mr. Henry, who was at a store in the next town, for help.

Ms. Ramsey felt that since Mr. Henry knew cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), they could help R.H. together. Ms. Ramsey stated that R.H. was doing well until that day (June 10, 2021) and had taken R.H. to a medical professional three or four times since R.H.'s birth. Ms. Ramsey stated she fed R.H. four-ounce bottles every two hours and added extra scoops of formula and rice. However, Ms. Ramsey stated she went through only one can of formula in a month. Ms. Ramsey stated she changed R.H.'s diaper every fifteen minutes, but then she said she went through a box of diapers in half a month. The OKDHS documented Ms. Ramsey stated she had bipolar disorder, but "she is not crazy around her kids though." Ms. Ramsey stated Mr. Henry had "four personalities, one named Dingus who is childlike and nice; one named Rage who is angry; the other she has never met and she doesn't know his name and then Kevin."

The OKDHS documented that collateral witnesses and call logs indicated Ms. Ramsey made other phone calls asking friends and family to look at R.H. before contacting 911 on June 10, 2021.

The OKDHS documented medical records indicated that R.H. had not been seen regularly by a medical professional since leaving the hospital after birth. The OKDHS documented that R.H. was seen by a medical professional on April 23, 2021, due to the OKDHS being involved with the family from the time of R.H.'s birth in March 2021. At that time, R.H. had already started to lose weight. Medical records showed R.H. weighed six pounds with clothes on. R.H. was seen by a medical professional again in May 2021 after a third-party witness told the parents they would call the OKDHS if the parents did not take R.H. to see a medical professional.

The OKDHS documented that Mr. Henry refused to be interviewed after being read his rights. Mr. Henry stated, "he was not scared to go to jail and had not done anything to that f\*cking baby."

The OKDHS documented a third-party witness stated they witnessed Mr. Henry pick Sibling One up by the arm, hold Sibling One in the air, and spank Sibling One. The collateral witness observed handprints on Sibling One's leg in the past.

The OKDHS documented that a third-party witness stated that during the previous summer, they found Sibling One in a car, sitting in a car seat alone and crying. The third-party witness stated it was hot outside that day. When this was brought to the parent's attention, the third-party witness stated Ms. Ramsey had told Mr. Henry he "needed to deal with [Sibling One] because she was tired of doing so and she had intentionally left [Sibling One] in the car because she was tired of [Sibling One] f\*cking crying."

The OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding of Abuse/Beating/Hitting by McKala Ramsey and Kevin Henry to Sibling One and Sibling Two. The OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding of Neglect/Threat of Harm by McKala Ramsey and Kevin Henry to Sibling One and Sibling Two. The OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding of Neglect/Near-Death by McKala Ramsey and Kevin Henry to R.H. The OKDHS recommended a deprived petition be filed on behalf of the children and the finding of Shocking and Heinous. The OKDHS also recommended that the "termination of parental rights be filed due to the severity of the abuse and the history and patterns of abuse that occur with Mr. Henry and Ms. Ramsey."

## **PRIOR INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRFC WITH OKLAHOMA DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Pertinent Investigation 1:**

On April 15, 2020, the OKDHS office in Cotton County received the first pertinent report. Reportedly, the biological mother, McKala Ramsey, spanked Sibling One, who was approximately nine months old. It was reported Sibling One had bruises all over Sibling One's bottom and legs from spanking. It was reported that the family did not have electricity or water in the home and slept in their truck with the children.

- The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.

On April 15, 2020, the OKDHS documented they observed Sibling One and Sibling Two. The OKDHS documented the children appeared clean and were free of any marks, bruises, or rashes. The OKDHS documented that the children had safe sleeping arrangements and that the home seemed appropriate.

The OKDHS documented that Ms. Ramsey and Mr. Henry denied ever hitting the children. Ms. Ramsey stated the children were staying with a relative while they were fixing up their house. The OKDHS documented the parents “realize and stated the property is not safe for the children and is not ready for anyone to live in.”

- The OKDHS made a Ruled Out Finding as to the allegation of Abuse/Beating/Hitting by McKala Ramsey and Kevin Henry to Sibling One and Sibling Two.

### **Pertinent Investigation 2:**

On March 27, 2021, the OKDHS office in Marshall County received the second pertinent report. Reportedly, the biological mother, McKala Ramsey, tested positive for marijuana at the birth of R.H. It was reported that R.H. had a positive urine drug screen for marijuana. It was reported Ms. Ramsey admitted to her prenatal medical professional that she had used marijuana when she went for her first two prenatal visits. It was reported Ms. Ramsey had sores on her body from head to toe and stated they were caused by her allergy to bleach. She stated two different stories to explain the sores. The first story was about Ms. Ramsey, who had some bleach that accidentally spilled on her. The second story was that some bleach got hot and splashed on her when she opened the bottle. It was reported that Ms. Ramsey was being appropriate with R.H. and that R.H. was not experiencing withdrawal symptoms at that time.

- The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.

On April 2, 2021, the OKDHS documented that Ms. Ramsey stated she breastfed R.H. every two hours for about thirty minutes on each side. Ms. Ramsey stated that R.H. was not spitting up and was a “good feeder.” Ms. Ramsey stated that R.H. slept in a Pack ‘n Play. The OKDHS documented they observed R.H.’s sleeping arrangement and found it safe.

The OKDHS documented that Sibling One and Sibling Two were observed and appeared clean and healthy. The OKDHS documented there were no marks or bruises observed on the children.

The OKDHS documented Ms. Ramsey admitted to smoking marijuana during her pregnancy. Ms. Ramsey stated she found out late in the pregnancy that she was pregnant. Ms. Ramsey stated she stopped smoking but had severe nausea and vomiting and could not gain weight. Ms. Ramsey stated she talked to her medical professional about her nausea and asked about using marijuana. Ms. Ramsey stated that her medical professional told her, “If it helped, use it.” Ms. Ramsey denied using marijuana since giving birth and denied any marijuana being in the home.

- The OKDHS made an Unsubstantiated Finding as to the allegation of Neglect/Threat of Harm by McKala Ramsey to R.H.

## **JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS PRIOR TO THE CHILD’S NEAR DEATH**

The OJSO identified no relevant judicial proceedings prior to the near-death incident.