

## Office of Juvenile System Oversight

# REVIEW OF THE NEAR DEATH OF K.U. TULSA COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Report Release Date: March 7, 2025

## OVERVIEW

On July 8, 2024, the biological mother, Jamie Ball, was charged with felony Child Neglect by the Tulsa County District Attorney. The district court arraignment is scheduled for March 26, 2025.

## IDENTIFIERS

Child's Name:	Age at Time of Incident:	Date of Near-Death Incident:
K.U.	Seven Months Old	March 20, 2024
Person Responsible for Child (PRFC):	Additional Identifiers:	
Jamie Ball (Biological Mother)	Sibling Two, Eight Years Old Sibling Three, Ten Years Old Sibling Four, Eleven Years Old Sibling Five, Seventeen Years Old	

## ACTIONS

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

The OJSO did not become aware of this case until after the near-death incident of K.U.

## NEAR-DEATH INCIDENT

On March 20, 2024, the OKDHS office in Tulsa County received the near-death report. Reportedly, the mother, Jamie Ball, was at the laundromat with a third-party witness when they observed that K.U. was not breathing well. K.U. was taken to the emergency department at a medical facility. Upon arrival, K.U. was in respiratory distress and determined to be in critical condition. K.U. was intubated and admitted into the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). K.U.'s drug test came back positive for fentanyl. It was unknown where the fentanyl came from or how K.U. encountered fentanyl.

- OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.

## INVESTIGATION

The persons interviewed during the investigation included the biological mother, Jamie Ball, and various third parties.

On March 20, 2024, Ms. Ball was interviewed by law enforcement. During the interview, Ms. Ball explained that her children had been in foster care since May 2023 due to her substance use. She stated that she gave birth to K.U. in August 2023, and they both tested positive for suboxone and fentanyl. K.U. was removed from her care on August 23, 2023.

Ms. Ball admitted that her drug of choice was “fentanyl” and that she last used it on “March 3, 2024.” She stated she would use “2.5 grams per day” but denied current use, explaining that she would use it right then and never kept the drug around.

Ms. Ball recounted the events on the day of the incident, stating that she and K.U. were with a third party for a visit. The third party took her to fill out a rental application and to the laundromat. She stated that she was in the backseat with K.U. when he started “acting funny.” Thinking that K.U. was “being funny,” she “got her phone out and started recording” K.U. Ms. Ball explained that K.U. began to act funny about fifteen minutes after leaving the laundromat. The third party pulled over, saw how K.U. was acting, and instructed Ms. Ball to drive and call 911. They met emergency services on the way to the medical facility.

Ms. Ball denied current use of fentanyl but stated that if she ever had extra fentanyl, she would bury it by a mailbox in an old Advil container. She further stated that when she used fentanyl, she would “snort it with a rolled-up dollar” or grab a straw. Law enforcement determined that all children and Ms. Ball would be drug tested. Ms. Ball tested positive for fentanyl.

On March 22, 2024, all the children, except for K.U., were forensically interviewed.

Sibling Five disclosed they were not with Ms. Ball because she used fentanyl. Sibling Five also disclosed looking in the glove box and finding a “short red straw and blue pills in an Advil bottle.”

Sibling Four disclosed they were in OKDHS custody because “my mom got addicted to the fentanyl.”

Sibling Two disclosed that they were not living with Ms. Ball because “she took pills” and was “doing fentanyl.” While Sibling Two denied seeing Ms. Ball use pills or fentanyl, Sibling Two explained that “it’s crushed up and in a straw.” Sibling Two stated it’s a “red straw,” and the “straw is short.” Sibling Two further disclosed, “She will take the straw, crunch it up, and cut it.”

- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Neglect/Threat of Harm by Ms. Ball to Siblings Two, Three, Four, and Five.
- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Neglect/Near Death by Ms. Ball to K.U.

OKDHS did not request additional court involvement as the children were already in OKDHS custody.

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

There were two pertinent reports prior to the near-death incident of one-year-old K.U.

### Pertinent Report 1

On August 11, 2022, the first pertinent report was received by the OKDHS office in Wagoner County. Reportedly, the mother, Jamie Ball, tested positive for substances at the birth of Sibling One. The results of the Sibling One’s cord blood are pending. Ms. Ball denied drug use. A medical professional noted there was a strong smell of marijuana in the room at the time of admission. Ms. Ball was observed to have marks on her arms consistent with intravenous (IV) drug use. Ms. Ball took a urine drug test, which was negative for illicit substances.

- OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority II Investigation.

On August 12, 2022, OKDHS interviewed Ms. Ball. Ms. Ball denied any recent drug use. She stated that when she found out she was pregnant, she had been taking Lortabs for knee surgery, but she stopped taking them.

On August 19, 2022, the results of Sibling One's cord blood test were received and were positive for fentanyl and norfentanyl.

- OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding of Neglect/Threat of Harm by Ms. Ball to Siblings One, Two, Three, Four, and Five.

OKDHS requested a deprived petition be filed.

## **Pertinent Report 2**

On August 16, 2023, the second pertinent report was received by the OKDHS office in Tulsa County. Reportedly, the mother, Jamie Ball, gave birth to K.U. At admission to the medical facility, Ms. Ball tested positive for fentanyl. A medical professional reported the baby was having breathing issues, and that was from the baby being substance-exposed. The baby's cord has been sent off for testing. It was reported that Ms. Ball has an open permanency planning case out of Wagoner County, and her other children have been placed in OKDHS custody. It was reported that in July 2023, Ms. Ball agreed to a hair follicle test, which indicated that she was positive for methamphetamines, amphetamine, and marijuana.

- OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.

K.U. was born with breathing issues and experienced severe withdrawal symptoms while in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at a medical facility due to Ms. Ball's substance use during pregnancy.

Ms. Ball reported using fentanyl during her pregnancy with K.U. Ms. Ball did not attend most of her prenatal care appointments, including appointments with the "high-risk doctor" while being pregnant with K.U.

OKDHS documented that Ms. Ball has an open permanency planning case and has not corrected the conditions that led to the removal of her children.

- OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding of Neglect/Threat of Harm by Ms. Ball to K.U.

OKDHS requested a deprived petition be filed on behalf of K.U.

## **JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS PRIOR TO THE CHILD'S NEAR-DEATH**

The OJSO identified one relevant judicial proceeding prior to the near-death incident. It involved Sibling Two, Three, Four, and Five.

On October 7, 2022, Siblings Two, Three, Four, and Five were removed from their mother's care and placed into the custody of OKDHS.

On January 3, 2023, the children were adjudicated deprived as to Ms. Ball.

On January 19, 2023, her Individualized Service Plan (ISP) was court-ordered.

On August 8, 2023, K.U. was born during the open permanency case and was placed in OKDHS custody due to Ms. Ball having not corrected the conditions that led to the other children's removal.

On October 25, 2023, K.U. was adjudicated deprived as to Ms. Ball.