

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

Report Release Date: February 9, 2015

**Review of the Death of Jezebel C. Donnell
of Canadian County, Oklahoma**

General Information

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the death of two-year-old Jezebel Donnell. Criminal Felony Child Abuse charges were filed in the District Court of Canadian County on July 18, 2012, against Casie Basford, Jezebel's biological mother.

Authorization

The following is a summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS); the dates and outcome of investigations and actions taken by the OKDHS; the actions taken by the district attorney; the dates and summary of judicial proceedings; and the rulings of the court, as authorized by 10A O.S. Section 1-6-105.

Identifiers:

Child's Name:	Jezebel Donnell
Date of Birth:	April 6, 2004
Date of Death:	January 14, 2007
Alleged Perpetrator:	Casie Basford, biological mother
Sibling 1:	twelve-year-old
Sibling 2:	four-month-old (deceased)

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) did not become aware of this case until after the death of Jezebel Donnell.

Criminal Charges

The Oklahoma State Courts Network (OSCN) documented that charges were filed against Casie Basford on July 18, 2012, as Criminal Felony Proceedings. The charge of Child Abuse was filed by the Canadian County District Attorney's office. The OSCN documented that a Warrant of Arrest was issued for Casie Basford on July 18, 2012. Casie Basford was arrested on July 27, 2012 her bail was set at \$10,000.00. On October 17, 2012, Casie Basford, entered a plea of Guilty to the charge of Felony Child Abuse. The court accepted the plea and she was given a ten year suspended sentence with the first six months to be served in the Canadian County jail.

Death Incident

On January 14, 2007, the OKDHS received a report that Jezebel Donnell was found deceased at home with a beaded necklace around her neck. The report was accepted as a Priority I Investigation.

The OKDHS responded to the home on January 14, 2007. The OKDHS documented that the residence was observed to be in poor condition.

During the investigation, the OKDHS documented Sibling 1 was being raised by another family member. The caregivers obtained legal guardianship of Sibling 1 in 2002.

The Medical Examiner Report documented the Probable Cause of Death in regard to Jezebel Donnell was Asphyxial Strangulation. The Manner of Death was ruled Unknown. The following was partial documentation from pathological diagnosis from the Report of Autopsy:

The cause of death is asphyxia strangulation. Based on the investigation, the decedent had been known to play with the beaded garland since Christmas time; using it as jewelry, etc. If unsupervised, the risk of accidental strangulation with this item is possible. Additionally, a previous infant of the decedent's mother died of apparent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, raising the suspicion of a non-accidental manner of death in this case. Accidental versus non-accidental strangulation cannot be determined with autopsy findings in this case and thus the manner of death is undetermined.

The OKDHS completed the Investigation in regard to the death of Jezebel Donnell on September 29, 2008. The OKDHS confirmed the allegations of Neglect/Death, Lack of Supervision, Inadequate/Dangerous Shelter, and Failure to Protect with the overall finding of Services Recommended.

The OKDHS does not currently have an open case on Casie Basford, as she does not have any children in her custody. The OKDHS closed the case September 30, 2008.

Prior Involvement with the Department of Human Services

The OKDHS received a total of four reports prior to the death of Jezebel Donnell. Two of these reports are pertinent to the death of Jezebel Donnell. The OJSD is including the report from October 25, 2005 since the report from the Medical Examiner noted in Jezebel Donnell's autopsy that there was increased suspicion of a non-accidental death due to previous death of Sibling 2. The report OKDHS received on August 23, 2006, is pertinent as well, due to the allegation Casie Basford was hearing voices telling her to do something to her child.

On October 25, 2005, a report was received by Canadian County OKDHS. It was alleged that a Sibling, who was four-months-old at the time, was found unresponsive by the mother. According to the Report to the District Attorney, EMSA arrived at the home and transported the Sibling to the local hospital. The child was pronounced dead at the hospital. It was also alleged that Jezebel Donnell, who was eighteen-months-old, was in the home. The report was accepted and assigned as a Priority I Investigation on October 25, 2005. The Medical Examiner's report documented the manner of death as "natural" and the cause of death as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) regarding Sibling 2. The Investigation was closed on June 22, 2006, with an overall finding of Services Recommended. The recommended service was grief counseling.

On August 23, 2006, a report was received by Canadian County OKDHS. The reporter alleged that Casie Basford had been intentionally inflicting harm to herself and hearing voices that were telling her to do something to her child. The OKDHS documented that a relative removed Jezebel from the home and the report was Screened-Out.

Judicial proceedings prior to the child's death

The OJSO identified no judicial proceedings prior to the death incident which would be pertinent to this report.