

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

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**Report Release Date: January 14, 2016**

**Review of the Death of Shaleah Cudjo  
of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma**

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**General Information**

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the death of Shaleah Cudjo.

**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 DHS; 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:	Shaleah Cudjo
Age at time of Incident:	Two years old
Date of Death:	September 3, 2015
PRFC:	Justin Lawson

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

**Criminal Charges**

Justin Lawson, a Person Responsible for the Child (PRFC) was charged with First Degree Murder and First Degree Rape in Oklahoma County District Court on September 18, 2015.

### **Death Incident**

The OKDHS documented that Shaleah was at home when the incident occurred on September 3, 2015. EMSA was called to the residence at approximately 10:30 or 11:00 a.m. and it was reported that the child was still alive at that time. It was reported the child was throwing up and had diarrhea, urinating on herself and shaking. The child was taken to Children's Hospital where it was found that her anus was ripped, she had an abdominal compartment injury and she was bleeding severely. The child was pronounced deceased at the hospital. It was reported that Justin Lawson the mother's boyfriend had already admitted to being the full time caretaker of the child and left the home when the ambulance arrived. The mother reported that when she got home from school Shaleah was unresponsive.

The Medical Examiner's report documented that Shaleah also had a lacerated liver, abdominal wall contusions, right and left chest wall contusions, bite marks on the right and left tongue, a deep contusion to the right upper back, a deep contusion to left mid-back, a deep contusion posterior upper thigh, penetration of the anus and rectum, associated rectal abrasions and hemorrhage and minor abrasions and contusion to the left chest, left groin and left thigh. The Cause of Death was documented as Lacerated Liver due to Blunt Trauma to the Abdomen and the Manner of death was documented as Homicide.

There were three families residing in this home and four other children that had been exposed to Justin Lawson due to residential proximity. All children were placed in OKDHS custody in order to assure their safety and wellbeing.

### **Prior Involvement of the PRFC with the Department of Human Services**

There was no prior pertinent reports of OKDHS involvement.

### **Judicial proceedings prior to the child's near death**

There was no Juvenile Judicial proceedings prior to the death of Shaleah Cudjo.