

## Office of Juvenile System Oversight

# REVIEW OF THE DEATH OF EASTON NASH COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Report Release Date: March 15, 2024

## OVERVIEW

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request regarding the death of seven-week-old Easton Nash. On June 14, 2021, the Comanche County District Attorney filed a felony charge of Manslaughter in the First Degree, Child Endangerment by Driving Under the Influence, Failure to Use Child Restraint System, and Failure to Maintain Insurance against the biological mother, Kiah Bell. On January 9, 2024, she was convicted on all counts and sentenced to twenty years in the custody of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, with ten years to serve and ten years suspended.

## IDENTIFIERS

Child's Name:	Date of Birth:	Date of Death:
Easton Nash	March 23, 2021	May 6, 2021
Person Responsible for Child (PRFC):	Additional Identifiers:	
Kiah Bell	Sibling One: 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. § 1-6-105.

The OJSO did not become aware of this case until after the death of Easton Nash.

## DEATH INCIDENT

On May 4, 2012, the child death report was received by the OKDHS office in Harmon County. Reportedly, on May 4, 2021, law enforcement contacted the OKDHS on-call, requesting a joint response. Law enforcement reported they were at the police station with the mother, Kiah Bell, and Sibling One. It was reported Ms. Bell and her two children were in a bad car accident caused by Ms. Bell running a red light. Seven-week-old Easton Nash was taken to a medical facility in critical condition. Law enforcement reported they were requesting the assistance of the OKDHS due to Ms. Bell's erratic behavior. It was reported Ms. Bell was talking about demons. It was reported that Ms. Bell was stopped for driving erratically earlier in the day. At that time, it was reported that Ms. Bell was "talking weird." It was reported that law enforcement spoke to a third party to address concerns for Ms. Bell's mental health. It was reported that law enforcement felt they did not have enough to hold Ms. Bell then, and Ms. Bell was released.

The OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority I Investigation.

## INVESTIGATION

The persons interviewed during the investigation included the biological mother, Kiah Bell, and various third parties.

The OKDHS documented that upon initiating the investigation, Ms. Bell exhibited odd behaviors such as referencing “flakka,” saying demons were swarming her head, and commenting that she could drink alcohol with her children in the car if she wanted to.

The OKDHS documented Ms. Bell left her home in Harmon County on May 3, 2021, at 9:00 p.m. with Easton and Sibling One. At 5:00 a.m. on May 4, 2021, Ms. Bell was pulled over in Oklahoma City. At that time, it was reported that law enforcement contacted a third party for Ms. Bell. The third party stated Ms. Bell showed signs of postpartum depression. Still, they had no concerns Ms. Bell was under the influence of any substances. Law enforcement felt they did not have enough to hold Ms. Bell, and Ms. Bell was released.

The OKDHS documented that on the morning of May 4, 2021, Ms. Bell traveled to Lawton, got something to eat, and then headed home to Harmon County. The OKDHS documented Ms. Bell stated she “ran” a green light; however, video evidence showed the light was red. Ms. Bell was traveling at a high speed right before the accident occurred. The OKDHS documented the vehicle data showed that at the time of impact, Ms. Bell was going sixty-one miles per hour in a forty-five mile per hour zone. The OKDHS documented that law enforcement determined that the seven-week-old, Easton Nash, was not properly buckled into his car seat. Upon impact, Easton was ejected from the vehicle.

The OKDHS documented Easton was taken to a medical facility, where he succumbed to his injuries two days later.

The Medical Examiner’s (ME) Report documented, “Male baby with evidence of acute medical intervention. He has acute blunt force trauma to his head with resultant bleeding, skull fractures, and intracranial bleed. No seatbelt pattern seen on the body. Radiology study shows an acute left parieto-occipital skull fracture with widening of the cranial sutures and an acute fracture of the left humerus.” The Probable Cause of Death was documented as Acute Blunt Force Trauma to the Head and Left Arm. The Manner of Death was documented as an Accident.

- The OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding as to the allegation of Neglect/Death by Kiah Bell to Easton Nash.
- The OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding as to the allegation of Neglect/Threat of Harm by Kiah Bell to Easton Nash and Sibling One.
- The OKDHS requested a deprived petition be filed on behalf of Sibling One. The OKDHS further asked for a finding of Heinous and Shocking Neglect.

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

### Pertinent Investigation

The report was received on March 25, 2021. Reportedly, the biological mother, Kiah Bell, gave birth to Easton Nash on March 23, 2021. It was reported that on March 24, 2021, Ms. Bell exhibited some “really weird behaviors.” It was reported that at 8:30 p.m., Ms. Bell repeatedly told a nurse to get out, close the door, and leave now. It was reported Ms. Bell appeared agitated and irritated. Ms. Bell was observed rolling her eyes at medical personnel and would not respond or acknowledge them when they attempted to speak to her. It was reported Ms. Bell would yell and curse at medical personnel. However, Ms. Bell would then thank medical personnel for everything they did for Easton. It was reported Ms. Bell’s behaviors cycled from being agitated to thankful, to a flat affect, and then back to agitated. It was reported Ms. Bell was also not supporting Easton’s head while holding him and was not gentle when handling Easton. Reportedly, on March 25, 2021, a social worker with the medical facility spoke to Ms. Bell, and Ms. Bell appeared to have a flat affect and seemed annoyed. However, the social worker was unconcerned about how Ms. Bell held Easton. At that time, medical personnel also stated Ms. Bell appeared appropriate with Easton. It was unknown if there was any history of mental health or substance abuse issues.

The OKDHS screened out this report upon receiving additional information. The OKDHS documented that “The mother’s actions towards the hospital staff, while not appropriate, does not indicate a safety risk to the child. There are no current concerns for the mother’s care of the child.”

The OKDHS documented they spoke to a third party of Ms. Bell’s for additional information. The third party stated they have never had any concerns regarding Ms. Bell as a parent. The third party felt Ms. Bell was attentive towards Easton and Sibling One and always with them. The third party denied any problems relating to Ms. Bell’s mental or physical health. The third party stated they felt Ms. Bell did have an attitude with adults if they say something that bothers her, but that Ms. Bell never had an attitude towards Easton and Sibling One.

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

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