

Office of Juvenile System Oversight

REVIEW OF THE DEATH OF GLAY-DAHZII COLE TULSA COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Report Release Date: November 18, 2024

OVERVIEW

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request to conduct a case review concerning the death of Glay-Dahzii Cole.

On April 1, 2024, the United States Attorney's Office filed a felony charge of Child Neglect in Indian Country against Mariah Cole, the biological mother.

IDENTIFIERS

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Child's Name: | Date of Birth: | Date of Death: |
| Glax-Dahzii Cole | January 22, 2021 | May 31, 2023 |
| Person Responsible for Child (PRFC): | Additional Identifiers: | |
| Marlah Cole (the mother) | Sibling One: 12 Months Old Sibling Two: Five Years Old Sibling Three: Ten 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 death of Glay-Dahzii Cole.

DEATH INCIDENT

On May 31, 2023, the Tulsa County OKDHS office received a child death report. Law enforcement was reportedly on the scene of the child death of Glay-Dahzii Cole. It was reported that the mother, Mariah Cole, had left Glay alone in the bathtub for fifteen to twenty minutes while she went outside the apartment complex.

- OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.

INVESTIGATION

During the investigation, Mariah Cole and third-party witnesses were interviewed. Upon initiation of the investigation, it was discovered that the family were tribal members, so tribal police were also called to the scene.

On May 31, 2023, Ms. Cole informed law enforcement that Glay had drowned in the bathtub. However, the medical examiner stated there was no water in Glay's lungs, and Glay was completely dry. OKDHS documented that law

enforcement informed them there was no water in the bathtub, and it was completely dry.

The OKDHS documented that Glay was observed to have a broken rib, two significant head traumas, bruising all over his body, and cuts inside his lips and on his tongue. Additionally, upon arrival at the medical facility, Glay's body temperature was about 81 degrees Fahrenheit, indicating he had been dead for several hours.

The OKDHS documented that the home was infested with roaches, crawling over the floors, walls, counters, children's toys, and bedding. A door was off its hinges and leaning against the wall, at one point falling on law enforcement. The floors were covered with trash and clothing. Rotting food was found in a pot on the stove, infested with flies. Dirty dishes with hardened food were observed in the kitchen sink, blocking access to the water faucet. The crib in the home was piled with items and was not accessible for Sibling One to sleep in.

The OKDHS documented that during the interview with law enforcement, Ms. Cole stated she had smoked methamphetamine earlier in the day, inside the home, with the children present.

On June 9, 2023, Sibling Three was forensically interviewed. Sibling Three disclosed that Glay had bruises on him for an unknown amount of time, "and his skin was getting darker." Sibling Three also disclosed that Sibling Three took care of the children by feeding, bathing, and disciplining them.

The medical examiner's report documented that the probable cause of death was unknown, and the manner of death was unknown.

The OKDHS documented that a child abuse pediatrician specialist reviewed the medical examiner's report. The specialist advised that, even though the blunt force trauma itself was not the cause of death, the injuries were consistent with child physical abuse. The specialist advised that the totality of the injuries could have caused the death, but that could not be determined.

- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Neglect/Threat of Harm by Ms. Cole to Siblings One, Two, and Three.
- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Lack of Supervision by Ms. Cole to Siblings One, Two, and Three.
- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Inadequate or Dangerous Shelter by Ms. Cole to Siblings One, Two, and Three.
- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Abuse/Death by Ms. Cole to Glay.

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

The OJSO identified one pertinent report of child abuse before the death incident of two-year-old Glay-Dahzii Cole.

Pertinent Report 1

On February 23, 2023, the first pertinent report was received by the OKDHS office in Tulsa County. Reportedly, a home visit was completed on this day, and no one answered the door; however, then two-year-old Glay came out. It was reported that emergency services were called, but fifteen minutes later, an unknown adult ran into the home, introduced themselves as a relative, and stated that the mother, Mariah Cole, was not home. It was reported that Glay had been unattended for at least twenty minutes and had a wide mark on the left side of his face, in various stages of healing, that appeared to cover his cheek to the jawline and was about six inches wide. It was reported that Glay was not questioned about the injury to his face and that law enforcement never showed up. It was also reported that there was concern regarding the medications that Sibling Three was supposed to be taking for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It was reported that Sibling Three had become violent and was a danger to peers at school; however, Ms. Cole was not overly concerned and often stated that she forgot to give Sibling Three the medications.

- OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.

On February 23, 2023, the OKDHS documented that they contacted the family. The OKDHS observed Glay, Sibling Two, and Sibling Three and noted that none of the children had visible injuries. A third-party witness stated that

Sibling One was with Ms. Cole.

The OKDHS documented that they attempted to contact Ms. Cole by phone; however, it went straight to voicemail. Ms. Cole sent a text message to OKDHS stating, "Unless you have a court order or warrant, do not contact me. Thank you. Have a good day." The OKDHS attempted to contact Ms. Cole again but received no response after the text message.

The OKDHS documented that they visited the home two additional times, and each time, Sibling Three answered the door. Sibling Three stated that a third-party witness was at home while Ms. Cole went to the store.

- OKDHS made a No Finding/Failure to Cooperate finding of Abuse/Threat of Harm-Bruises by Ms. Cole to Glay.
- OKDHS made a No Finding/Failure to Cooperate finding of Lack of Supervision by Ms. Cole to Glay.
- OKDHS made a No Finding/Failure to Cooperate findings of Failure to Protect by Ms. Cole to Sibling Three.

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS PRIOR TO THE CHILD'S DEATH

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