

## Office of Juvenile System Oversight

# REVIEW OF THE DEATH OF E'MYA SAMUEL TULSA COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Report Release Date: October 8, 2024

## OVERVIEW

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request to conduct a case review concerning the death of E'Mya Samuel.

On March 18, 2024, the biological mother, N'Jerin Samuel, received felony charges of Child Neglect and Murder in the Second Degree in the Commission of a Felony by the Tulsa County District Attorney.

On March 18, 2024, the biological father, Eric Jones, received a felony charge of Child Neglect by the Tulsa County District Attorney.

## IDENTIFIERS

Child's Name:	Date of Birth:	Date of Death:
E'Mya Samuel	May 25, 2021	February 3, 2024
Person Responsible for Child (PRFC):	Additional Identifiers:	
N'Jerin Samuel (Biological Mother) Eric Jones (Biological Father)	Sibling One: Eleven Months Old Sibling Two: Two Years Old Sibling Three: Four Years Old Sibling Four: Five 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 E'Mya Samuel.

## DEATH INCIDENT

On February 1, 2024, a child death report was received by the Tulsa County OKDHS office. Reportedly, two-year-old E'Mya Samuel was unresponsive when emergency services arrived. E'Mya was administered Narcan and transported to a medical facility. It was reported that when E'Mya arrived at the medical facility, she had sluggish pupils and was intubated. It was reported the mother, N'Jerin Samuel, was falling asleep on the way to the hospital and at E'Mya's bedside. It was reported that the child tested positive for fentanyl and benzodiazepines. It was reported that a medical professional stated this was near death.

- OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.

## INVESTIGATION

N'Jerin Samuel, Eric Jones, and third-party witnesses were interviewed during the investigation. On February 1, 2024, OKDHS documented that Ms. Samuel was interviewed by law enforcement at the medical facility. Ms. Samuel stated that E'Mya told her that she was not feeling well before they went to sleep. Ms. Samuel stated the biological father, Eric Jones, came into the room while they were sleeping. Mr. Jones asked her what the "blue thing" was in E'Mya's nose. Ms. Samuel stated the blue stuff on E'Mya's nose must have been fentanyl because of the way it looked. Ms. Samuel denied having fentanyl in her home. Ms. Samuel stated after OKDHS got involved with her family last time, she stopped using fentanyl and completed her services. However, later in the interview, Ms. Samuel was asked when she last used fentanyl, and she stated, "Uh, the last time I used fentanyl was probably, probably, last week. Not last week, I'm sorry, last month." When OKDHS asked if she would submit to a drug test, Ms. Samuel said yes. When OKDHS asked if there were any reason fentanyl would be in her system, Ms. Samuel asked, "...if it could get into her system from touching something at her friend's house," and she was told probably not. Ms. Samuel ended the interview around the twenty-four-minute mark, stating she wanted to see E'Mya. Approximately five minutes after the end of the interview, Ms. Samuel attempted to find a ride to pick her up so she could leave. Within approximately ten minutes after the interview, Ms. Samuel left E'Mya alone at the medical facility to wait for a ride home.

OKDHS documented that law enforcement interviewed Mr. Jones at home. Mr. Jones stated he had been gone that evening, and when he got home around midnight, E'Mya was in their bed, and he tried to wake her up so he could put her in her room. Mr. Jones stated that E'Mya would not respond and that her eyes were half open. Mr. Jones stated he checked E'Mya's pulse, called for emergency services, and started cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). When asked if he saw any residue or anything on E'Mya's face when he found her, Mr. Jones stated he did not remember seeing anything because he was in shock. When Mr. Jones was told that E'Mya tested positive for fentanyl, he denied fentanyl use but stated that Ms. Samuel had used fentanyl in the past.

OKDHS documented that when law enforcement searched the home, they found "a white/blueish powder" on the kitchen floor. Ms. Samuel identified the substance as fentanyl but was unable to say how it got on the floor. Law enforcement also found "two red straws cut with residue inside."

Later that same day, OKDHS contacted Ms. Samuel, informing her that she and Mr. Jones needed to complete a drug test. Ms. Samuel asked if she had to, and OKDHS asked if she would test positive for anything. Ms. Samuel asked if she had to and OKDHS asked if she would be positive for anything. Ms. Samuel admitted she would have fentanyl in her system. She admitted to last using an hour prior. Ms. Samuel reported she bought it off the street. She admitted that she used two pills a day. Ms. Samuel stated that she crushed them up and would snort the pills throughout the day. She stated that Mr. Jones did not know about her use, and she hid it from him.

OKDHS documented that neither parent was consistent at the medical facility, and they had to call them multiple times to get them up to the medical facility. Once at the medical facility, Mr. Jones would leave, and then Ms. Samuel ended up being kicked out due to being high and leaving the room repeatedly.

On February 3, 2024, E'Mya passed away after no brain activity was found.

On February 5, 2024, the surviving siblings were placed into the emergency custody of the OKDHS.

On February 6, 2024, a child safety meeting (CSM) was held. During the meeting, Ms. Samuel's story continued to change when the last time she used drugs. Mr. Jones continued to deny any drug use.

On February 6, 2024, Sibling Three was forensically interviewed. Sibling Three disclosed that "...Daddy knocked mommy out." Sibling Three punched hands together and said, "...Daddy did that to Mommy."

On February 7, 2024, Sibling Four was forensically interviewed. Sibling Four disclosed that Ms. Samuel has "blue medicine for Mommy's nose." Sibling Four disclosed that E'Mya called it "nose medicine." Sibling Four disclosed that Mr. Jones takes the "blue medicine" too. Sibling Four disclosed they "crack the pill up, sneeze, and take it up a red straw."

On February 7, 2024, a Show Cause hearing was held. After the hearing, both parents took a drug test. Mr. Jones tested positive for marijuana and alcohol. Ms. Samuel tested positive for alcohol with abnormal levels of Creatine.

The medical examiner's report stated that the probable cause of death was anoxic encephalopathy due to probable fentanyl toxicity, and the manner of death was an accident.

- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Neglect/Threat of Death by Ms. Samuel and Mr. Jones to E'Mya.
- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Neglect/Threat of Harm by Ms. Samuel and Mr. Jones to Sibling One, Two, Three, and Four.

OKDHS recommended that Siblings One, Two, Three, and Four be removed from Ms. Samuel and Mr. Jones's custody. OKDHS recommended a deprived petition be filed on behalf of the children. Further, OKDHS recommended immediate termination of parental rights.

## 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 E'Mya Samuel.

### Pertinent Report 1

On September 16, 2023, the OKDHS office in Tulsa County received the first pertinent report. Reportedly, the mother, N'Jerin Samuel, tested positive for fentanyl. Ms. Samuel admitted to fentanyl use and stated it was not prescribed. Sibling One was in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), suffering from withdrawal symptoms due to Ms. Samuel's drug use.

- OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority II Investigation.

On September 17, 2023, OKDHS documented Ms. Samuel admitted she had taken "perc's" off the street and other people's prescriptions but did so only due to back pain with pregnancy. Ms. Samuel admitted that she took pills for two days. Ms. Samuel did not think about how it would affect the child. She denied any other substance use.

The father, Eric Jones, advised he was unaware Ms. Samuel had taken anything while pregnant. Mr. Jones denied ever seeing Ms. Samuel under the influence of anything or being unable to parent their children.

OKDHS documented the children were all seen and spoken with, and there were no concerns. Sibling Four was the only child old enough to be interviewed. Sibling Four did not disclose any drug use in the home or concerns with the family.

On September 26, 2023, OKDHS documented Sibling One's cord blood came back negative for all drugs.

- OKDHS made an Unsubstantiated of Neglect/Threat of Harm by Ms. Samuel to Sibling One.

OKDHS recommended and sent a referral for Ms. Samuel to complete a drug and alcohol assessment and counseling services. A deprived petition was not requested as OKDHS documented the "children are currently safe with their parents."

## JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS PRIOR TO THE CHILD'S DEATH

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