

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

Report Release Date: April 7, 2014

Review of the Near-Death of J.R.

of Muskogee County, Oklahoma

General Information

On October 4, 2012, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the near-death of J.R. A Felony Child Neglect charge was filed in Muskogee County District Court on September 25, 2012, against Chelsea Richardson, J.R.'s mother.

Authorization

The following is a summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS); the dates and outcomes 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:	J.R.
Age at time of Incident:	Three-years-old
Date of Near-Death:	September 20, 2012
Person Responsible for the Child:	Chelsea Richardson, biological mother
Sibling 1:	Seven-months-old

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth did not become aware of this family until after this near-death incident on September 20, 2012.

Criminal Charges

The On Demand Court Records (ODCR) system documented that charges were filed against Chelsea Richardson on September 20, 2012. The charge of Child Neglect was filed by the Muskogee County District Attorney's office. The ODCR documented that a Warrant of Arrest was issued for Chelsea Richardson on September 25, 2012. The ODCR also documented that her bail was set at \$10,000.00. Chelsea Richardson pleaded guilty to the count of Child Neglect. She was sentenced to a five-year deferred

sentence and was ordered to pay fines and costs. She was also placed under the supervision of the Muskogee County District Attorney's office.

Near-Death Incident

On September 20, 2012, the OKDHS received a report that J.R. had been attacked by a pit bull dog in the family's backyard. J.R. was found face down with head injuries. The child was breathing but not responsive. J.R. was airlifted to a medical facility and admitted to a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). The medical facility documented that the child was admitted in critical condition.

The OKDHS accepted this referral as a Priority I Investigation. Child Protective Services workers from three counties worked this investigation. The OKDHS documented that an adult in the home came into the family living room and saw Chelsea Richardson talking on the telephone. When Ms. Richardson was asked where J.R. was, Ms. Richardson replied that the child was outside in the backyard eating a popsicle. The OKDHS documented that the other adult opened the back door and found J.R. lying on the ground with the pit bull dog standing next to the child. According to OKDHS documentation, that adult brought J.R. into the home and Ms. Richardson called 911.

The OKDHS received documentation from a medical professional that J.R. was admitted to a critical care medical facility on a ventilator "with extensive scalp lacerations, a nondisplaced Salter-II fracture of her left distal radius, and puncture wounds on [the] arm."

The OKDHS documented an overall finding of Substantiated as to the allegation of Neglect-Lack of Supervision and Neglect-Failure to Protect. The OKDHS requested a petition to be filed and the children were removed by Emergency Court Order on September 20, 2012. On September 20, 2012, Emergency Custody of both J.R. and Sibling One was granted to the OKDHS by the Muskogee County Court. Both children were placed in an OKDHS Foster Home. On October 23, 2012, the children were moved from Emergency Custody to Temporary OKDHS Custody.

The OKDHS documented that an Order Appointing Petitioner Guardian for Person and Estate of Minor Children was ordered in the matter of J.R. and Sibling One, granting custody to relatives on November 19, 2012. This order was signed by a Judge in Muskogee County, different than the Judge assigned to the Juvenile Deprived matter, and was completed without the knowledge of either the assigned Juvenile Deprived Judge or the OKDHS.

The OKDHS documented that a deprived court hearing was held in Muskogee County District Court on December 11, 2012. According to the OKDHS documentation, an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) was imposed by the Court for Ms. Richardson, the children's father, and the guardians.

At the last Juvenile Court hearing on January 7, 2014, the Court ordered the children to remain in the custody of the guardians and for the OKDHS to supervise this arrangement. The Court was satisfied that Ms. Richardson was making satisfactory progress on her ISP and set the matter for a future date.

Prior Involvement with the Department of Human Services

There were no previous reports that were pertinent to the near-death incident.

Judicial proceedings prior to the child's near-death incident

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