

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

Report Release Date: June 1, 2016

Review of the Near Death of K.C.

of Sequoyah County, Oklahoma

General Information

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the near death of K.C. A felonious charge of Child Endangerment-Permitting Abuse was filed in Sequoyah County District Court on April 8, 2014, against Morgan Crow, the child's mother. A Felonious charge of Child Abuse by Injury was filed on the same date against Alexander Turner, the mother's live-in boyfriend.

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 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 (below).

Identifiers:

Child's Name: K. C.
Age at time of Incident: Seven months old
Date of Near Death: March 30, 2014
Sibling 1: 18 months old
Persons Responsible for the Child (PRFC): Morgan Crow and Alexander Turner

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

Near Death Incident

On March 30, 2014, the OKDHS received a report that seven-month-old K.C. was brought into the Emergency Room by her mother Morgan Crow, with first and second degree burns to the child's face, scalp, and neck. The report alleged that the mother claimed that her eighteen month old child had poured hot milk on K.C. The report stated that the treating physician stated that explanation seemed inconsistent. The report

alleged the burns covered K.C.'s entire face, that both ears were burned as well as the skin behind both of her ears. The report also alleged K.C.'s nose was crusted over from the burn, her eyes were crusted shut, and her cheeks and mouth were so swollen that she could not open her mouth any wider than it already was.

The report alleged the burn on K.C.'s scalp went about halfway to the back of her head, down to her chin, and was on parts of her neck. The report stated that K.C. was in critical condition and transferred to an Arkansas Hospital. The report alleged K.C. had bruising to the top and bottoms of her feet (with the bruising worse on the top) and bruising to her knees bilaterally. The report further alleged that the mother claimed the bruising on K.C.'s knees was from K.C. crawling around but she did not know how bruises to K.C.'s feet occurred. The report stated that the doctor said it was possible for the bruising to be from abuse or neglect.

The report alleged that the mother said K.C. got the burns yesterday evening when she was making a bottle and had heated it in the microwave for 30 seconds. The report further alleged that the mother said she went into the bathroom and started bath water when she heard a scream. The mother claimed she went back and saw that her other child had pulled the hot liquid bottle out of the microwave and dumped it on K.C.'s face. The report alleged that the mother said she did not think the burns were that bad and that is why she did not seek immediate medical attention.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation. The OKDHS documented that there were several different scenarios presented to them about what had happened to K.C. One scenario indicated that a hot bottle of formula was poured on K.C. by her eighteen-month-old sibling, but that claim changed to a scenario in which K.C. fell into hot dishwater while Alexander Turner, the mother's boyfriend, did the dishes.

The OKDHS documented that K.C. was developmentally delayed and was not able to sit up on her own, not able to crawl, and that she had a difficult time doing many things she should have been doing at her age. Though there were many discrepancies as to how K.C.'s injuries occurred, the OKDHS documented what was clear, was that K.C. sustained a life threatening injury to her head, face, and neck as a result of very serious burns possibly caused by submersion. The OKDHS documented that according to medical staff and records, the burns were first and second degree burns which covered ten to twelve percent of her body primarily on K.C.'s face and scalp. The OKDHS documented that according to medical findings, the burns were at least twenty-four hours old at the time medical treatment began and at least eighteen hours old by the time Morgan Crow sought out any medical attention.

The OKDHS documented that K.C. had also suffered extensive bruising to her left knee, the tops and bottoms of both feet, and down her back. The OKDHS documented that the injuries appeared to be in various stages of healing. The OKDHS documented medical professionals contended that child abuse was highly suspected due to the multiplicity of injuries and the history of delay in seeking medical attention.

The OKDHS documented an overall finding of Substantiated as to the allegations of Abuse Near-Death, Neglect Failure-to-Obtain-Medical-Attention, and Neglect Lack-of-Supervision against both Morgan Crow and Alexander Turner. The OKDHS documented a request to the District Attorney that a petition be filed and further, that the abuse was found to be Heinous and Shocking in nature. The OKDHS documented a request that the petition reflect that reasonable efforts not be required and that a motion be filed for the immediate termination of Morgan Crow's parental rights. Sibling 1 was removed on March 31, 2014.

Prior Involvement of the PRFC with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Morgan Crow had previously been involved with the OKDHS and two of those reports were pertinent to this report as they related to allegations of Neglect Failure-to-Obtain-Medical-Attention, and Neglect Lack-of-Supervision. The first report of relevance was received by the OKDHS on August 13, 2013. This report alleged that new born infant K.C. and her mother were hospitalized due to an infection upon delivery. The OKDHS documented that both the baby and Morgan Crow were hospitalized, but upon the mother's discharge (which was earlier than the child's) the mother did not stay with newborn K.C. The report also alleged that Morgan Crow did not visit K.C. and that she was not involved with K.C.'s medical treatment process. According to the OKDHS documentation the report was screened out because the report was not clear about the mother's residency as she was homeless and there was no information which indicated if the mother resided in Oklahoma. The report stated that Morgan Crow was either in Arkansas or Oklahoma, but her location was unknown. The OKDHS documented that the information was forwarded to the Arkansas child abuse and neglect hotline.

The second report of relevance was received by the OKDHS on August 19, 2013, and accepted as a Priority II Investigation. The OKDHS documented that the mother, Morgan Crow, was observed with bizarre and unusual behaviors following the delivery of K.C. It was alleged that the mother was using illegal substances.

The OKDHS documented that Morgan Crow did not show any emotion about her baby and that K.C. had lost weight since her birth and had not gained any weight at one month old. The OKDHS documented that Sebastian County Child Welfare in Fort Smith, AR recommended that K.C. be placed into State's custody. The OKDHS also documented that a Judge declared Morgan Crow's two older children unsafe with her based on the allegations listed in this referral. The OKDHS documented that no safety threats existed for K.C. and that she was safe with her mother. The OKDHS documented there were no services needed and that there was no petition requested. The OKDHS documented an overall finding of Unsubstantiated as to the allegations and the investigation was closed with no services or safety plans in place.

Alexander Turner had previously been involved with the OKDHS and two of those reports were determined pertinent to this report as they related to a history of physical abuse by Alexander Turner. The first report of relevance was received by the OKDHS on June 29, 2008. The OKDHS documented that Alexander Turner held his five-year-old stepchild down by the neck, choked, and slapped the child on the face. The OKDHS

documented the incident left red marks on the child's jaw and that the child suffered a bruise next to the left eye, and sustained scratches on the cheek which were documented to be consistent with the child's disclosure during a forensic interview.

The OKDHS documented that there was clear evidence to support the allegations and a safety plan was put into place which restricted all contact between Mr. Turner and his stepchild. The OKDHS documented a recommendation for no unsupervised contact between them. The OKDHS also documented that Mr. Turner had a two-month-old child, who also resided in that home, but there were no safety provisions documented as to that child. The OKDHS documented an overall finding of Confirm-Services Recommended and the investigation was closed on August 22, 2008.

The second report of relevance as to Alexander Turner was received by the OKDHS on January 2, 2013. The OKDHS documented that there was a joint response effort with law enforcement after Alexander Turner was arrested for Domestic Battery on a Child in the second degree. The OKDHS documented that the police and the OKDHS observed Alexander Turner's two biological children (both under the age of five-years-old) to be covered in bruises and injuries. The OKDHS documented that one of the children had hand shaped, petechiae on both sides of the face and above the ears, a red mark on the back top of the head, scattered bruising on the chest and back, and bruising on the buttocks. The OKDHS documented that both children had bruises on their arms and legs in various stages of healing which were yellow, red, and different shades of brown. The OKDHS documented that the other child had red welts on both sides of the face, multiple bruises on the forehead, bruises and abrasions on the face, chest, back right shoulder and scattered bruises on the right arm and back of left arm. The OKDHS documented that during a forensic interview one of the children disclosed that their father burnt him on the thumb with a "hot tool."

The OKDHS documented that initially Alexander Turner denied knowing how the injuries occurred to the children. It was also documented by the OKDHS that Alexander Turner then provided various explanations which were not consistent with the injuries. The OKDHS documented that eventually Alexander Turner confessed to the police that he slapped one of the children because he was on a "downward spiral" that morning because he did not get his medication and he became aggravated. The OKDHS documented that the State of Arkansas filed charges of Domestic Battery on a Child in the second degree.

The OKDHS documented an overall finding of Substantiated and both children were placed into emergency custody and removed from Alexander Turner. The investigation was closed on February 15, 2013. According to the OKDHS documentation, Mr. Turner stipulated to the allegations on February 25, 2013 and the children were adjudicated deprived.

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

With regard to Morgan Crow, the OJSO identified one previous judicial proceeding with regard to guardianship of K.C.'s two older siblings which was pertinent to this report. On

August 20, 2013, a Petition of General Guardian was filed with the Sequoyah County, District Court for the emergency custody of K.C.'s two older siblings. On August 21, 2013, Temporary Guardianship was granted by the Sequoyah County, District Court. According to the Sequoyah County, District Court documentation, an appointment of guardianship was ordered by the court on December 18, 2013. On March 31, 2014, an Emergency Motion to end visitation between the mother and K.C.'s older siblings was granted by Sequoyah County District Court.